

Frank Johnson on Lord Home's 'Letters to a Grandson'

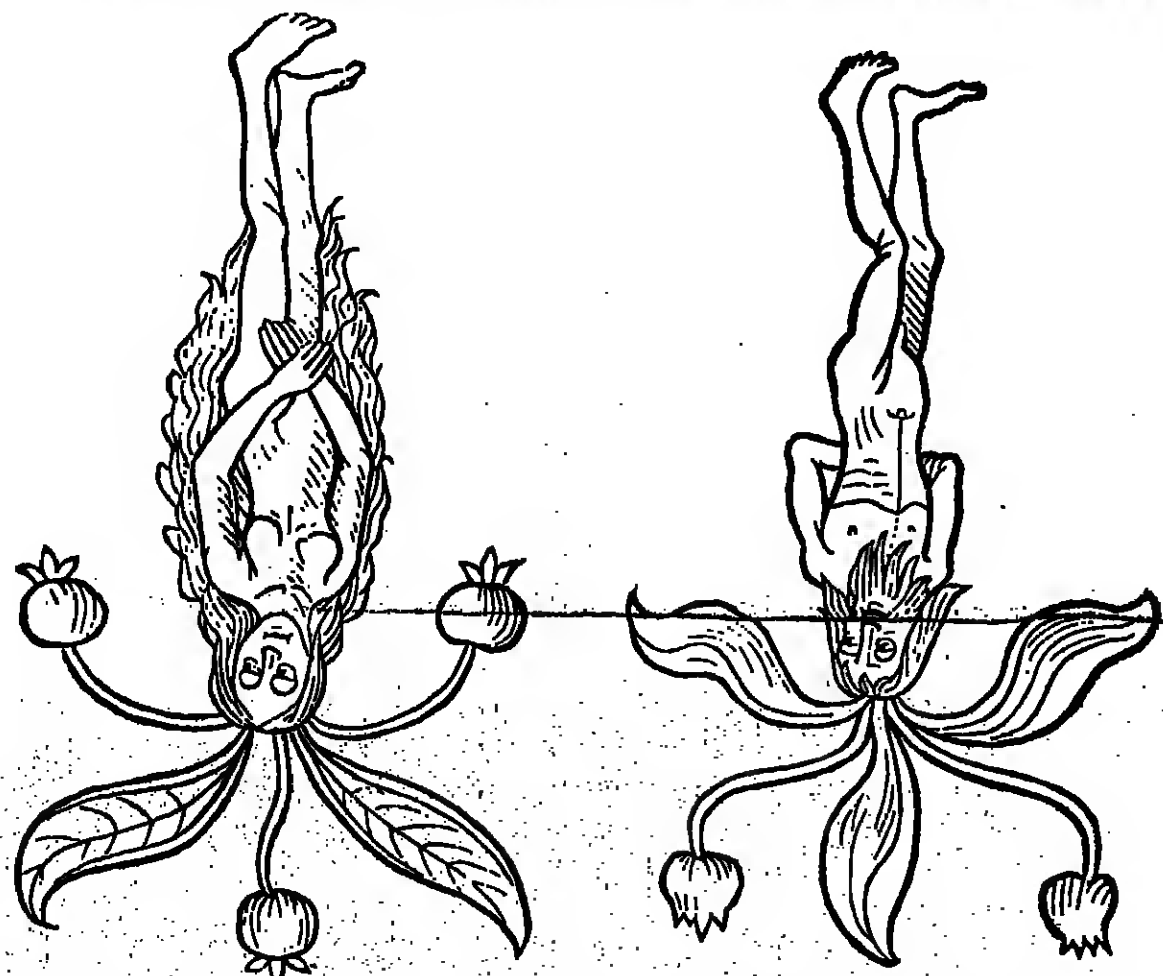
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Jacob Meydenbach's woodcut on paper depicting Mandrake and Mandragora from the fifteenth-century herbal, Hortus Sanitatis, reproduced from Gardens of the Middle Ages by Marilyn Stokstad and Jerry Stampard, published by the Spencer Museum of Art and the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas.



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The Oxford Shakespeare

Brian Pippard: God and the new physics

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Objectivity and the sociologist

Edmund Wilson's 1940s

Noël Annan: the case for M. R. James



'The Three Brothers Brown', 1598, a miniature from the Burghley House Collection featured in the exhibition at the Victoria and Albert Museum entitled Artists of the Tudor Court: The Portrait Miniature Rediscovered 1520-1620 (reviewed on page 832).

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From reportage to evaluation

Steven Lukes

W. G. RUNCIMAN

A Treatise on Social Theory: Volume 1, The Methodology of Social Theory
350pp. Cambridge University Press.
£25 (paperback, £8.95).
0 521 24906 6

Practising social scientists who turn to reflection upon the nature of their activity do not always arrive at profound or revealing conclusions, or indeed even an accurate account of that activity. Often it is better to do as they do rather than as they say. Philosophers, on the other hand, reflecting upon what social scientists should do, do not always grasp, or even care, what they do, or can do. They legislate, at a vast distance from live debates and real research. One of this book's many virtues is that it focuses philosophically informed reflection upon the actual work of, and difficulties faced by, practising sociologists, anthropologists and historians (though not economists or psychologists). W. G. Runciman is himself such a practitioner. Among his previous books is the still pertinent *Relative Deprivation and Social Justice*, and the two successor volumes to *The Methodology of Social Theory* are devoted to "substantive social theory" and "applied social theory" about "the case of twentieth-century England" respectively. The argument of this first volume is both supported and advanced by frequent detailed examples that are often highly instructive and entertaining in themselves, in most agreeable contrast to the normal philosopher's practice of adducing examples that are radically underdescribed. Runciman offers us methodology teaching by example; and for this alone his book is well worth reading.

Yet, though philosophically informed, the argument is plainly not directed at philosophers, or indeed to philosophers' concerns. Indeed, it pursues what one could call an "avoidance strategy" in respect of philosophy. Runciman practises methodology rather than philosophy, offering "guides to practice" - maxims with the help of which sociologists, anthropologists and historians may be enabled better to succeed in what they set out to do. He says of his book, correctly, that it does "not pretend to advance by a single step the resolution of any of the disputes among

philosophers of science": one of its principal purposes is to enable practitioners "not to ignore but, so far as possible, to bypass those disputes without damage to their substantive research". So it goes "far enough and no further into the philosophy of social science" for such practitioners "to proceed with their work without further misgivings about its vulnerability to methodological criticism". Accordingly, they "do not

abandon the "enchanted garden" of the natural sciences) and, on the other, from taking proper account of the distinctive nature of his subject-matter (namely, intentional and meaningful action). Plainly his strategy makes philosophical assumptions, but its purpose is to protect social science from philosophy, not least from the paralyzing influence of the "lecture room sceptic".

What, then, is Runciman's principal

either philosophical or technical ones. If this argument is correct, he says, the two hundred-year-old "debate" between those who affirm and those who deny that there is a fundamental difference in kind between the sciences of nature and the sciences of man... can for practical purposes be regarded as closed.

Is it? Can it? To answer that, we must look more closely at the

degrees of discretion on the part of the social scientist engaging in them. Is this case convincing?

Consider first *reportage*, or "primary understanding". To *report* is to "say what is going on... in such a way that any rival observer will be bound to agree, however much the two of them may disagree over the further presuppositions which may underlie, or even dictate, their subsequent explanations, descriptions or evaluations". It "goes no further than the point where noises and gestures can first be labelled as actions because of the meaning to 'them' which makes them so", by "direct reference to the agents' own intentions and beliefs in the contexts in which they have been observed". So we may report that "it is a rain dance" or "they are getting married" or "he is aiming a gun at a rabbit" or "they believe in God" or "they own slaves". In such cases, we are asked to imagine a "recording angel" supposed to be "present at and throughout whatever event, process or state of affairs is under discussion, but to have brought to it no explanatory, descriptive or evaluative presuppositions of any kind". He is only, as it were, "the keeper of a videotape library so comprehensive and so detailed as to put him in a position to see and hear everything that an enquiring fieldworker could ever have wanted to see or hear." How is success in *reportage* to be assessed? Runciman suggests two criteria: "acceptability in principle to those whose actions, and therefore intentions and (where relevant) beliefs, it designates"; and acceptability to "all rival observers".

Where, then, is the "all-important frontier" between the theory-neutral (but not presuppositionless) *reportage* of an event, process or state of affairs on the one side and its explanation, description or evaluation on the other? Runciman answers that to say "they are practising magic" or to speak of a "hierarchy of prestige" or "feudalism" or "peasants" is to pass beyond that frontier; such terms cannot be transposed *salva veritate* into the terminology of rival observers from different theoretical schools.

The chapter on *explanation*, or "secondary understanding", is the weakest in the book. Its thesis is that in the social as in the natural sciences explanation isolates presumptively causal connections that are grounded



"Hans", from the section entitled "Piercing" in City Indians: Photographs of Western Tribal Fashion by Chris Wroblewski and Nelly Gonzalez-Vitez (80pp. Frankfurt: Ekhnorn. DM28.5 8218 1710 0), with a bilingual German/English text.



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in theory at a more fundamental level. For

every science depends for its grounding on the strict regularities disclosed by some relatively more fundamental level, and sociology, which is not merely historically but analytically the last of the sciences, cannot but be the least unambiguous in this respect. But it is not the least scientific for that. (Sir Keith Joseph please note!) There is no denying that there must be laws at some level if sociological or any other causes are to be causes of social or any other events, processes or states of affairs. But there is no need whatever for them to be related to the explanandum and each other as they are in so atypical a science as Newtonian mechanics, with its closed systems, time-reversible regularities and interlocking differential equations.

Runciman readily admits that "in the absence" for the time being at least — of a comprehensive and well-tested psychology, all explanations of human institutions and practices which can be shown to be valid for reasons which alibi observers who dispute them can go out and test for themselves". Thus

Levi-Strauss's hypothesis that the story of Aspidochelone has been composed and transmitted as we observe it to have been because it is an expression of the strain inherent in a system of patriarchy and matrilineal cross-cousin marriage stands or falls by the same criterion as Tocqueville's hypothesis that the storming of the Bastille gave expression to a resentment of the institutions of the ancien régime which came to seem progressively less tolerable as the possibility of removing them came to seem progressively more feasible.

Such explaining works through "quasi-experimental reasoning": appealing to "suggestive contrasts". The test of its success appears to be plausibility in the face of available rivals: in the absence of a "comprehensive and well-tested psychology", we must accept "weak but adequate theoretical grounding" and "as relaxed a definition as possible" of "theory" and "cause".

It is the engaging chapter on description, or "tertiary understanding", which constitutes the book's real claim to originality. Although it entirely eschews the vast literature (German, French and English) on hermeneutics and interpretation, it is rich in shrewd insight and telling illustrations from literature and biography, as well as history and social science. It advances the idea that description is a distinct social-scientific task: that of conveying the actors' world from within. Using metaphor and simile, it seeks to "bridge a presumptive divide between the culture of those whose words, thoughts or deeds are being described and that of the presumptive reader and/or the sociologist himself". The function of descriptive theory is to "formulate concepts that can bridge the divide between the former's and the latter's experience". The "ideal-typical concepts of a good explanatory theory will be broad in scope, general in content, free in operation and simplifying in effect": those of a good descriptive theory may be "parochial in scope, specific in content, restricted in operation and complicating in effect". Description gives the sort of understanding we get of "their life and times" by reading (the list is Runciman's: Flaubert, Malinowski, John Dollard, William Foote Whyte, Erving Goffman, Oscar Lewis and Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie).

Description fails, if it involves misapprehension (which in turn divides into incompleteness, oversimplification and ahistoricity) and mystification which divides into suppression, exaggeration and ethnocentricity. These are "six types of inauthenticity", and of course there must be more. Runciman diagnoses these sins of omission and commission as cases of the describer supposing that "they" see their world "in a way which is pre-emptively dated by a descriptive theory of his own". And where evaluation "pre-emptively" interferes with description you get derogation (leaving the reader with a pejorative implication that goes beyond the reportage of their evaluation by "them") and

hagiography (leaving the reader with an implication that is too favourable), romanticization and generalized cynicism (which Runciman calls "no-bullshit bullshit").

How, then, can description succeed? Runciman suggests once more (as with reportage) the criterion of authenticity: descriptive metaphors should be "acceptable in principle to the person whose behaviour or attitude is being described with the help of it". He further suggests representativeness: one must "convey both authentically and representatively the priorities of subject, milieu and period". And it must convey these successfully to "rival observers". Yet incompatible descriptions may cohere rather than conflict, as "jointly constituent parts of a common whole". In matters of reportage and explanation, Runciman ventures, we must accept "some sort of correspondence theory of truth": in matters of description "as it were a coherence theory".

On evaluation Runciman gives a straight and uncomplicated version of the fact-value distinction: "the methodological difficulty is not that facts and values are inextricably intertwined". The "disentanglement" (the metaphor recurs throughout) can always be performed. On the other hand, he does not advocate an old-fashioned "value-neutrality", realizing its futility as a maxim for real-life social scientists. Instead, he does something rather odd: he advocates what he calls the "prepositional of benevolence". This amounts to the assumption of Pareto-optimality: where "the members of a definable group or category are all agreed that a change is an improvement in their well-being as they see it, and the researcher cannot find any respect in which anyone else's well-being is diminished in consequence", then the social scientist is entitled to compare "better" and "worse" states of affairs according to this canon. This question whether, under such singularly rare circumstances, the group or category "is or would have been better off by their own prescriptive standards under one or another set of conditions" is a properly sociological one. In asking it, the social scientist

is committing himself to taking seriously the wants, grievances and aspirations of the members of the society concerned, however alien from his own. But in refusing at the same time either to appraise their values and preferences in the light of his own, or to take sides as between different groups or categories of "them", whose values and preferences conflict, he is preserving the independence from moral, political or aesthetic judgment without which any claim to be offering the reader a work of social science and not of philosophy or propaganda (or both) would be impossible to sustain.

The social scientist, then, is entitled to speak of "successful reform", "discernible progress", "enlightened policy", "beneficent influence", "heightened well-being", "amelioration of conditions", "diffusion of prosperity", "increase in welfare" (or their opposites), but not, presumably, of, say, "political and cultural liberation" or a "growth of civic consciousness" or the overcoming of "false consciousness" in any but the thinnest sense. The allowed judgments are, Runciman thinks, theory-neutral. If, say, the social scientist prefers slavery after abolition, the sociologist who questions that preference (by asking whether they are better off despised) is "patronizing and irrelevant" and invokes a "blatantly paternalistic judgment grounded, if at all, in a highly contentious theory of determinate human needs".

Is Runciman's case convincing? I doubt it, and my doubt comes down to this: so far as I can see, the four strands of his argument are either too thin for his purpose or inextricably from others.

Can "reportage" — the simple identification of "what is going on" — really be distinguished from "explanation" and "description"? Surely not at any level relevant to the practice of social scientists? For first, are not successful reports the best available explanations of what people say and do? Runciman seems to think that we can simply discover what people mean and believe (though he acknowledges that to do so is not "presuppositionless" and a matter of "pure observation"), without assessing

its truth or rationality. But do we not rather determine this by selecting that account which best explains what they say and do, in the context of all they say and do, and does this not require us to invoke our canons of truth and rationality? We say "he is performing a rain dance" because this best explains his words and actions. Mutual intelligibility relies upon none such accounts being entirely uncontentious and obvious. But they are not always so. In West Africa certain tribes apparently say "we insult" and the response is laughter. But what do they say, and is it laughter? And are they insulting, or joking?

Second, are not reports, at the level of actions, rather than events and processes, always descriptions? Of course, such descriptions may be thin ("he winked") or thick ("he winked with his customary sly irony"). Some reports might seem utterly uncontentious to the "recording angel" (eg "he kneels and mutters") but to be of use to the social scientist he must make sense of what the man is doing (namely "praying") and that is already to describe. In short (to sum up these two points), one significant difference between the natural and the social sciences is that the data of the latter cannot be identified without being explained and interpreted.

Third, of course, description in Runciman's sense must be successfully communicated: the describer must succeed in conveying the actor's world from within to his reader. Yet it is hard to see how this could be a theory-neutral or value-neutral activity, since to succeed he must relate to and build upon his reader's theories and values. And can the social scientist in pursuit of "description" really avoid "explanation" and "evaluation"? He cannot avoid description if his explanations and explanandum already require interpretation (recall Aspidochelone's story and the "strain" in the kinship system; or the "storming" of the Bastille and the "resentment" of the people). And he cannot avoid evaluation if the very concepts in which he is couching explanations must be couched reflect the (value-relevant) interests of the explainer in, say,



The glided head of an enemy king from the Golden Stool of Ashanti, reproduced from Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies by Michael Craton (385pp. Cornell University Press, £25).

attributing responsibility to historical actors, or discovering obstacles to the realization of values such as welfare, freedom, or self-development, or community. Finally, I cannot see Runciman's restriction of such inquiries to Pareto-optimal improvements relative to (imputed) actual preferences as anything more than a cautious liberal prejudice.

If my doubt is justified, two conclusions follow. First, that his methodological maxims are going to mislead practitioners. They had better not do as he says: social anthropologists would be better advised to follow Clifford Geertz's advice and seek "thick descriptions" from the start, while sociologists and

historians should rather heed Max Weber's suggestion that their explanations embody their value-related interests (or Kulturverurteilung). And, second, that his avoidance of strategy fails because it rests on inadequate philosophy, and a particular false theory of meaning. (Of course, social science should be protected from inadequate philosophy). It is this which distorts the structure of his argument and the sharp boundaries he draws (including that between social sciences and philosophy itself). It also permits him to avoid, rather than solve, the old debate about the natural and the social sciences. So it looks as though the debate will go on.

are stories of valiant problems, embarrassing language difficulties, smashed jaw, hepatitis, malaria, and lots more. Either Barley or the Dowayo seem particularly involved with male circumcision, this being a main topic of conversation between him and his informants.

The jokes are usually at the author's expense, playing on his own ignorance of Dowayo customs (and foreign customs in general). Commenting on one ceremony which was beyond his level of comprehension at the time, Barley notes: "I merely sat on a rock, watched, and took photographs of the parts that seemed intuitively interesting." Some statements, though, could be offensive to those of particularly prodigious sensibilities, by whom I mean those inclined to see racism and sexism in every joke about ethnicity or sex.

Consider this bit of advice, reminiscent of an Evans-Pritchard or a Malinowski: "Sexual encounters in Africa are not unromantic and brutish in their nature; they are rather a device for increasing the alienation of the fieldworker, not to moderate it, and are best avoided."

Barley is in fact part of a growing trend. Like H. J. Heinz (with Marshall Lévi-Strauss) in the fieldwork among the Bushmen, A. F. Robertson (in East Africa), and Manda. Caesar (a pseudonym) in Central Africa, he seems to have as much to say about himself as about his people. But we like Heinz's *Namkwin*, Robertson's *Community of Strangers*, or Caesar's *Reflections of a Woman Anthropologist*. The *Innocent Anthropologist* is light-hearted and funny, it has no serious point to make, except perhaps that sometimes it is worth having a good laugh at one's self. And so in some ways it is a book for the connoisseurs — the experienced fieldworker who can easily recognize the humorous anecdotes left over from his field diary, the sort of stuff most social anthropologists trot out year after year in lectures, in pubs, at dinner parties, and over sherry with innumerable young tutees. There

THOMAS MANN

Reflections of a Nonpolitical Man
Translated by Walter D. Morris.
435pp. New York: Ungar. \$29.50.
0 8044 2585 X

Nationalist, patriotic, conservative, and spiritually autobiographical, Thomas Mann's *Betrachtungen eines Unpolitischen* was written during the First World War and, in part, against his brother Heinrich, and Heinrich's anti-nationalist, anti-militarist essay on *Zola*, itself aimed in part at Thomas, and Thomas's earlier essay on Frederick the Great. It is a strange, enormously clever (also foolish), and (in an alarming sense) fascinating piece, of sustained, often anguished and sometimes contorted eloquence.

Unease — if what is explored and expounded with such fluency and sweep can truly be said to be uneasy — is deep, even rampant. In the opening paragraphs. Can this, this what? be said to be a "book" as the word is understood by one with "twenty years of not completely thoughtless artistic practice" behind him? (A nice conjunction of doubt and self-confidence). Or should it be thought of as notes, or chronicles, or a form of diary? This "bundle of papers", which at least sometimes shows "the ambition and habits of a work", is "something intermediate between work and effusion, composition and hack-work". And so it goes on for pages yet, invoking Carlyle, Coethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Stifter, Flaubert, Dostoevsky... surely remote from political discourse than the mere adjective "nonpolitical" would convey! Yet if these "notes" do not (as they may) form "a work of art", one reason is that they are "just too much the work of an artist".

Mann explains that he has entered the lists against "the new" — the new "passion", the new sentimentality, the new "resolute love of humanity" (his quotation marks), sharpened as all this by French theatrical maliciousness — simply because it has confronted him personally, and all the more poignantly because equipped with "the highest literary skill". (Possibly a touch of family pride there). The liberal, forward-looking, internationally-minded *Zivilisationskritiker*, his brother, also his enemy, is political, and therefore "democratic" — for there is no other version of politics — and democracy denies "every nonpolitical ethos". It turns art into "social literature" and intellect into "a thing between a Jacobin club and Freemasonry". Democracy, or politics, denies the German character, since Germans do not love politics and truly want "the much desired 'authoritarian state'. Politics should be left to the Poles and the Irish, it being the only activity they are good for."

This in the present conflict Mann desires Germany's victory, but in "a disinterested way": he has no shares in heavy industry, no capital invested in world trade. It strikes one that his picture of the democratic Germany that might emerge from defeat is not unlike Forster's — or his character Fielding's — more comical view of India achieving nationhood. "What an apocalyptic last chapter to the drab nineteenth-century afterthought... She, whose only peer was the Holy Roman Empire, she shall rank with Guatemala and Belgium perhaps!"

In representing Germany as wordless and inarticulate in its mystical resistance to "Roman civilization" and the shallow talkative West, Mann reminds us of a creation of his own. We may have thought of the giant Dickenian of *The Magic Mountain*, verbally incoherent yet dwarfing the "intellectual lights" around him, as representing something like "Life" — but perhaps Mythenberg, Peepertorn, and for Germany, Mann's Germany. What use would a wordless Thomas Mann be? Again he strikes, and finds quite eloquent praise for "life generous word", "the heart-stirring phrase". Even so, in his present terms, the "Roman West" is literary whereas Germany is musical. Dostoevsky is an art he was to have given his life to, and Mann's Germany, should also find favour with many an armchair anthropologist, both professional and amateur.

The abyss of German-ness

D. J. Enright on a translation of Thomas Mann . . .

ironic in making the Heinrich-like Settembrini consider it "politically suspect", yet in *Doctor Faustus* it was the Devil, trustworthy in such matters, who characterized music as "the Diver's Kingdom . . . A highly theological business . . . the way sin is, the way I am." Rather than music, or "Life", Germany is Soul, perhaps. "What is German is an abyss."

In Chapter 4 "Soul-Searching", Mann sets out to examine himself, or to do so more overtly. He is in some ways, he finds, un-German. But then, *Elective Affinities*, "taken formally", is "not a very German work", and elsewhere — Goethe's prose — is "sometimes scandalously French". In fact, to be to some extent un-German, even anti-German, is a part of being German. Look at Schopenhauer: indisputably German ("Can one be a philosopher without being German?"), but also "a *bel esprit*" (nasty rhetorical French expression?) and a "European prose writer" of a new type. Much the same is true of Wagner: very German ("Can one be a musician without being German?"), and yet, by virtue of the "all-powerful European charms" that emanate from his music, occupying a "modern, almost extra-German position". Likewise, *Myths, Muses, and Nietzsche*. Likewise Thomas Mann (can one be a German without being Thomas Mann?); his music, a burlesque, arises ("the German and the burlesque character are one and the same") and yet — in the shape of *Felix Krull*, the memoirs of a confidence man — parodying the *Bildungsroman* itself, the great and characteristically German literary form!

The concept of Germanness grows increasingly vague and impalpable — but only because it grows ever larger, extending beyond good and evil. It is profound enough, as abysses often are, to accommodate its enemies and its opposites. Or it would so do were Mann not so very indignant, so sorely wounded. Who, one wants to inquire, were all those un-German Germans, "civilization's literary men", busily hoping for Germany's defeat and subsequent assimilation into "Europe" and "democracy"? One would think that Mann stood alone against a massed horde of family pride there. The liberal, forward-looking, internationally-minded *Zivilisationskritiker*, his brother, also his enemy, is political, and therefore "democratic" — for there is no other version of politics — and democracy denies "every nonpolitical ethos". It turns art into "social literature" and intellect into "a thing between a Jacobin club and Freemasonry". Democracy, or politics, denies the German character, since Germans do not love politics and truly want "the much desired 'authoritarian state'. Politics should be left to the Poles and the Irish, it being the only activity they are good for."

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went down. Elsewhere in *Reflections* the author reminds himself that we can die only one death, and so "Death does not become more terrible when we see it multiplied ten thousand times before our eyes" — the great pessimist has turned optimist! Rather worse, in a chapter entitled "Some Comments on Humanity", he turns his rage on Nurse Cavell. The word "humanity" — "anointed with all the oils of French rhetoric and Anglo-Saxon cant" — is being used as a battle-cry to "glorify, dishonour, and besmirch a nation that is engaged in its most serious, difficult, historical struggle". So:

What was it other than mankind's lack of seriousness and nobility, lack of tragic sense when the entire world sentimentally deplored the execution by order of a court-martial of an Englishwoman who misused her nurse's uniform to help Belgian soldiers over the border? Her conduct couldn't even have been "purely patriotic" because she wasn't a Belgian, but what seems to exasperate him most is that the woman ("a thoughtless ninny") fainted and had to be unceremoniously shot by the officer in charge. "A political action that can lead to the firing squad should only be undertaken by someone who feels himself justified and called to the task, and who is to some extent certain that he will not faint before the firing squad." Is this a new Rule of War? Or is it a makeshift speaking, the artist with his care for propriety, unity of action and organic form!

Mann was never sentimental — but never again was he to be so blatantly feelingsless, so (to put it mildly) unsentimentally cruel. What had happened to his famous irony? Rather more amusing, and less discomfiting, are his shocked references to the wickedness of the Bourbon régime — "l'île de justice, Bastille, Deer Park" (an editorial footnote intimates that this was where French girls were "brought to the king from the people"), "a parasitic court", etc. — and to what could be expected in the case of a German defeat: "a somewhat amusing, somewhat insipidly humane, trivially depraved, femininely elegant Europe à la Edward the Seventh, à Montpelier, Europe, literary as a Parisian cocotte . . . Well, propaganda breeds counter-propaganda, and here,

view, very much what Hovelague has said so well in his earlier story, "Les Causes profondes de la Guerre." "Germany" has embodied for 2,000 years the eternal revolt against Rome. The German is by nature no politician; he does not act on reasoned principles, but on deep, elemental instincts; he repudiates, ever since the first came into contact with it, the Roman ideal of international law, the application of intelligence to politics, the supremacy of reason. He is essentially unitary, whereas the child of Rome insists on putting everything into words, debating, explaining, justifying. The latter conceives the war as "a colossal Dreyfus affair", an attempt to rectify a legal wrong. For the German it was a summons of destiny, to which the whole race responded to the inmost fibre of its being. Or, to take another metaphor, it is the *Vorspiel* to *Lothengrin* against the Latin spirit of international elegance and lucidity.

The Germans are a people of heroic temper, ready to take guilt upon themselves, and not inclined to cringing moralizings. They have never complained of what was wrought against them by the pitiless enemies of their life, but neither have they ever doubted that two rights to use revolutionary methods. They approved these methods, and more than approved them. They approved the invasion of Belgium, and had nothing to take exception to in that event except the Chancellor's phrase about the wrong he was doing. They approved the destruction of that insolent symbol of England's sea mastery, the giant pleasure ship *Lusitania*, and faced undaunted the hue and cry of humanitarian hypocrisy which then

What he has to say about Germany is, with far more amplitude and detail, and of course from an opposite point of

Mann is talking like a politician, like a more than usually gifted Minister for Propaganda.

"Irony is always irony towards both sides", Mann says near the end of *Reflections*. And for reassurance we turn back to a rather famous passage in the Prologue, where Mann asks himself why he is making all this effort:

Why the harmful and compromising galley service of this book that no one demanded or expected of me, and from which I will have no trace of thanks and honour? One does not worry to this degree about something one does not need to worry about, that is none of one's business because one knows nothing about it and has nothing of it in oneself, in one's own blood. I said that Germany had enemies within of her own walls, allies and advocates of world democracy, that is, in this possibly repeated in miniature? Do I contain elements in my own conservative innards that aid and abet Germany's "progress"? Could it be true . . . that I myself with a part of my nature was and am fated to further Germany's progress to what in these pages is given the quite figurative name . . . of "democracy"? And what part would this be, then? The literary part, perhaps? For literature is democratic and civilizing from the ground up; even more correctly: it is the *same* as democracy and civilization. And could it be my authorship, then, that, for my part, has caused me to further Germany's "progress" — while I was fighting it conservatively?

The answer to some of the questions milling around in that passage must be "Yes". In *The Magic Mountain*, published in 1924, six years after the *Reflections*, there is a similar confrontation: between Settembrini, internationalist, optimistic-ameliorative, Italian, organ-grinder of high-minded platitudes (a favourite term of disapprobation in *Reflections* is "bellezza", as in "bellezza radicalism"), and Naphta, fierce, pessimistic, authoritarian, ex-Jesuit Nietzschean. When it comes to a duel, Settembrini fires in the air and the incensed Naphta shoots himself in the head. The young Castorp, for whose mind and heart these two had been contending, has already made his choice:

filled the world. They not only approved, they screamed for the unrestricted prosecution of submarine warfare, and strove to the verge of an outbreak with the rulers who delayed to give it free way. It is for our enemies, out of their democratic orthodoxy, for whom "the people" must always be good, as well as out of their political craftiness, to try to distinguish between the honest German people and their abominable leaders — not for us. And, however the war may end, we shall accept the German share of the guilt of it, every man of us — except perhaps a handful of pacifists and of the saints of literature — and seek for no scapegoats in the functionalities of the moment.

Thomas Mann may at the present hour perhaps regret a little that he penned these lines — and that not only because the German people in defeat have scarcely lived up to his conception on this point, the Alleea at least must not be deceived in the main concern. If he is right in his conception of what Germany represents in world-politics, then most certainly a temper and character so deeply graven in a nation's breast will not disappear by magic in an hour of disaster and of turbulence. "Civilization," as Mann calls it with a sneer, has triumphed in arms, but until it has triumphed in spirit Germany will be a mortal danger to the world. Let us not forget, however, that this is very triumph, the triumph in Germany of the spirit of democracy, was the cause of Mann's deepest anxiety — he saw it from far off, it is true, but he saw it; and the issue of the war must have made it far more menacing to the Germany of 1914 whose soul has been so vividly portrayed in this remarkable book.

"Yes, yes, pedagogic Satana, with your *ragione* and your *rebelle*", he thought. "But I'm rather fond of you. You are a wind-bag and a hand-organ man, to be sure. But you mean well, you mean much better, and more to my mind, than that knifed little Jesuit and Terrorist, apologist of the Inquisition and the knout, with his round eye-glasses — though he is nearly always right when you and he come to grips over my paltry soul, like Ood and the Devil in the medieval legends."

Those with natures so deeply sceptical, so ironic in cast, are unlikely to be progressive in their politics. Neither do reactionaries. Politicians as we know them, whether of the Right or of the Left, could make precious little (except by very careful selectiveness) of this complex and vehement debate between brothers. Heller has remarked on the difference between the passionate learnedness of the *Reflections* and "the forward-looking political exhortations", well-meaning and studiously simple-minded, of Mann's later years, and in particular the high-minded platitudes about East and West with which he greeted the end of the Second World War. He was not talking about himself then, and not *de profundis*: he was speaking as a representative — the representative — of the "good Germany", a rather different Germany. There are some fine passages here on art and artists, for example:

Art, like religion, is the human sphere; politics disappears before it like mist before the sun. Art assimilates politics, even use it as a subject, it can portray political events, but then art will humanize politics, illuminate it psychologically, and its objectivity will be serene and prodigious all the way into tragedy.

Even so, it seems to me that *Reflections*, however brilliantly argued and sustained, contains a considerable deal of rant, and in general the best things in it are a pleonastic ransacking of what is said more tellingly and persuasively in Mann's fictions both before and after. The publishers observe that now we have the last major work of Mann's to be translated (no easy job!) into English. It is also the last we need, the one we least need, to read.

approved, they screamed for the unrestricted prosecution of submarine warfare, and strove to the verge of an outbreak with the rulers who delayed to give it free way. It is for our enemies, out of their democratic orthodoxy, for whom "the people" must always be good, as well as out of their political craftiness, to try to distinguish between the honest German people and their abominable leaders — not for us. And, however the war may end, we shall accept the German share of the guilt of it, every man of us — except perhaps a handful of pacifists and of the saints of literature — and seek for no scapegoats in the functionalities of the moment.

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Tales of one city

E. S. Turner

PETER BUSHELL

London's Secret History
267pp. Constable. £8.95.
0 09 464730 5

Adrian Stevenson is said to have defined an editor as "a person who separates the wheat from the chaff and prints the chaff". That is the excellent principle adopted by Peter Bushell in his anecdotal survey of London. We have all read history books in which the footnotes are vastly more diverting than the text, so why not a book of footnotes? The great puzzle is to know why Mr Bushell and his publishers pretend he has compiled a secret history of the capital.

Bushell's method is to tour the city street by street, plucking tales, like pennies, from the air. On a single page we encounter the former home of the Bath Club, which censured Johnny Walsamuller for "failing to swim like a gentleman"; the site of the pawnbroker's where Crispin disposed of his wife's jewels; the site of the chemist's where De Quincy bought his first opium; an "emporium" of Marks and Spencer's (two out of three women will be wearing a "St Michael" bra"); and a branch of Bata, which once sold a pocketed climbing boot for nudists. That's how it goes: the magic assembly system presided by a real zealot.

As a former London guide-lecturer Bushell probably sat one of those examinations with questions like "Which is London's smallest police-station?"; "Which public clock killed a

man?"; and "From which gentlemen's club was Aneurin Bevan kicked into the street?" He works off these familiar bits of lore along with less familiar and often delectable items, like Maurice Baring's thoughtlessness in compelling a waiter at the Turf Club, causing him to break down (it was the first kind word he had received in forty years); Sir Philip Sassoon's hauling down of the Union Jack over his Park Lane home because it was too garish against the evening sky; and Gladstone's habit of going to bed with morning tea in his hot water bottle.

Bushell is not a man racked by doubt. He says the widow of the 9th Duke of St Albans left enough sovereigns to carpet twenty-four square miles, and does not query a statement that John Fielding, the blind magistrate, could recognize the voices of 3,000 wrongdoers. But it is his inimitable appetite for ghost stories that will have honest unbelievers screaming for mercy. He tells us that a Man in Grey was once seen by 150 people in the Theatre Royal, where he materializes in the end-seat of row D in the upper circle. The ghost of Admiral Sir George Tryon was seen by "several hundred" people at his wife's at-home in Eaton Place on the exact moment his ship went down. In University College Hospital the ghost of a nurse who inadvertently poisoned her sweetheart with morphine "usually manifests at the bedside of someone about to receive a morphine injection". There are many, many more. A tree in Greco Park talks and laughs. The silhouette of a mighty axe can sometimes be seen overhanging the Tower. At midnight on moonlit nights in Westminster Abbey a statue turns the page of a stone book.

Horace Walpole said of the once-notorious Cock Lane ghost (strangely omitted from this book) that "it would not pass muster in the palatial convent in the Appennines". Some of Bushell's ghosts would not pass muster even in the Appennines, where he tells us, such things are unusually strange. Yet in his bibliography there are at least five books on haunted London, so he must know what the market will bear.

Many items are quoted from John Timbs and other curiosity-collectors of an older day. These tend to be recognizable from the old-fashioned fates which overtake people: attacks of apoplexy, hair turning white overnight, minds becoming unhinged by horrors. Some of Augustus Hare's best stories are here, notably the one about the wooden-legged woman of Cadogan Place who married a pressing widower and found he had twice been married (by sheer coincidence) to women with wooden legs; also the woman who woke in the night, alarmed by mysterious groppings, to find that a sleep-walking butler was laying dinner for fourteen on her bed (the London connection is not specified).

For most stories no source is given, which does not greatly matter, but occasionally curiosity is whetted. Neville Chamberlain, described as "the startled cab-horse" and "utterly charmless", is said to have had an outlook typical of his fellow factory-owners, who did not hold with safety precautions. When the tides of the maimed drove other workers from their benches, "the directors imposed a series of fines for workers inconsiderate enough to scream when injured".

The author misses a chance to show us the house of the publisher who was asked by his most famous author to do him a favour and bury the body of his five-year-old daughter. He does mention, however, a letter by Samuel Rogers saying that the corpse of Byron's Allegra was sent from Italy "in two packages, that no one might suspect what it was". Does this, perhaps, count as a real secret at last?

In Belgravia the trail comes close to Lord Lucan's home but the murder is never mentioned, though a book about the Lucan affair is listed in the bibliography. The Georgi Markov umbrella-tip killing is briefly described, but on the whole Bushell is not greatly interested in modern ghost-free murders.

This reviewer, who nearly abandoned the book after what seemed the hundredth apparition, found his interest quickening as the author reached the Bank of England. It has two ghosts, but neither of them is the reviewer's ancestor, William Swinney Turner, who was acquitted in a sensational trial of embezzling £10,000 from the Bank. Despite the verdict, the affair was known as "Turner's Fraud". Surely he must have come back from time to time to haunt the directors?

His father, Sir Barnard Turner, gave the order to fire on the London mob in Broad Street, during the Gordon Riots, a disciplinary exercise much admired by his descendants. Bushell ignores the Gordon Riots, which threatened to lay London waste, is there no ghostly crack of musketry to be heard in Broad Street?

caricatures, preserve till the very last. Friends conformed to single out this quality of infantine tenderness. "How did they know the man?" said Cruikshank at the novelist's funeral, "who thought him a hard, cold and cutting blade. He was much more like a kindly, loving little girl."

"Dear old kindly child!" cried Herman Melville, "he had all the nervous susceptibilities... of a woman; bawling, indeed, about him more than any other man I have known, of Goethe's ostentatious *Erwählbarkeit*." Children, mistaking his pangs of loneliness and nourished on unending supplies of buns, ices and tarts, were treated with corresponding gratitude and affection. As Blanchard Jerrold recalled: "When Thackeray observed a child at play, he was touched by the natural flow of his movements and the natural philosophy underlying his prattle. Dickens put himself under the glossy plumes of the raven in the happy family and dwelt wistfully on the juvenility of the youngster's exposed calves."

Jerrold's analysis underlines a popular contrast which Thackeray at any rate took seriously, so much so that on one occasion he actually ambushed Dickens's daughter Kate in Kensington High Street on the pretext of going shopping with her, solely to discover more about her father's writing habits. That Dickens himself was less interested, either in the rivalry or in the object, is made clear from his benign yet lukewarm Cornhill obituary sketch. The two had, in any case, their peace after the prolonged frays between their Garrick Club partisans over the unworthy issue of a portrait of Thackeray which, in his wit, blurted his pride easily touched, by Thackeray's *bière noire*, the egregious hack Edmund Yates, whom Dickens had over-hastily defended from blackballing.

Neither novelist emerged from the quarrel with credit, though Yates's thrust at Thackeray's assumed "gentlemanliness" had been shrewdly aimed. The lethal anatomy of *The Book of Snobs*, Punch's Prize Novelists and the Second Funeral of Napoleon had become the lapdog and jackanapes of ladies-to-waiting, lion-hunting hostesses and drooling Americans. That all too familiar syndrome of literary paralysis reflected in a sudden profusion of celebrity names, from Dean Liddell to W. P. Frith and in the writer's apparent contempt for his mother begins to colour the sequence of narrative and reflection. His daughter, Army recalls meeting her father, while she and her sister Minny were carrying a parcel of Vanity Fair numbers to a friend across Kensington Gardens.

"Somehow he seemed vexed and troubled, told us not to go on, and to take the parcel home. Then he changed his mind, saying, 'that the books and best be conveyed; but we guessed, as children do, that something was seriously amiss.' Perhaps, after all, what had frightened Thackeray most was the intensity of his own vision in those very volumes. The last word belongs with Browning, who wrote to Isaac Blagden, 'I am told he looked grandly in his coffin. Thackeray with all the nonsense gone would be grand indeed, and I hope and trust that it improves.'"

The child was imperishable. By the simple act of breaking Thackeray's nose in a Charterhouse playground scuffle, George Stovin Venables gave his myopic adversary that strange, enchanted, "otherworldly" look which, the portraits, including his own self-

done the book after what seemed the hundredth apparition, found his interest quickening as the author reached the Bank of England. It has two ghosts, but neither of them is the reviewer's ancestor, William Swinney Turner, who was acquitted in a sensational trial of embezzling £10,000 from the Bank. Despite the verdict, the affair was known as "Turner's Fraud". Surely he must have come back from time to time to haunt the directors?

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The imperishable child

Jonathan Keates

PHILIP COLLINS (Editor)

Thackeray: Interviews and Recollections
Two volumes: 394pp. Macmillan. £15 each.
0 333 26805 9

The Victorian literary community can be characterized as a formal dinner-party at an immense mahogany dining-table. At one end sits Tennyson, glowering and silent, gnawing a piece of mutton and listening to Browning (whose wife is feeding her spaniel with scraps under the table) and Trollope roasting at each other. Dickens is doing a series of quick-fire comic impersonations and the Carlyles are gloomily trying to reconcile a dish of boiled potatoes with the constipation from which they both suffer. Charlotte Brontë tries bravely not to be noticed, a saturnine Matthew Arnold plays with his spoo, George Eliot is a sympathetic listener and William Allingham is there noting everything down on his shirt cuff.

Paradoxically one of them is boastfully enjoying himself, least of all that inveterate trocheerman Thackeray. An air of increasingly dogged conviviality pervades Philip Collins's deftly assembled scrapbook of life-records and reminiscences and we can hardly be very surprised to find John Cordy Jeaffreson excusing his reference to the novelist's "broken constitution" with "Had his appetites—especially his appetite for the pleasures of the table—been under his control, I should not be justified in using so strong an expression." That they weren't explains both Thackeray's irresistible charm of manner, in company and that enduring failure of nerve which ultimately submerged his fictional artistry. Noise and omnium gatherum abided him continually from confronting the singular nature of his talent, and anecdotal reminiscence is framed accordingly to a context of oyster-shells, sauce-boats and wine-coolers. The war correspondent "Billy" Russell recalls, for example, a Watford shooting party which was to have included Dickens, who cried off at the last moment, much to the hostess's chagrin. "The effect was unpleasant," Mrs X. fled along the hall, and the guests heard her calling to the cook, "Marta, don't roast that ortolan; Mr Dickens isn't coming." Thackeray said he never felt so small. "There's a test of popularity for you! No ortolans for Pendennis!" George Augustus Sala sketches him at a Cornhill dinner (the guests included Millais, Landseer and G. H. Lewis) "as a post-prandial speaker," "undeniably the reverse of felicitous." To another contemporary he confided, "at a big dinner I behave like a child... I can be admirably prudent, so long as there is no need for prudence; but with the first glass of champagne, away goes my prudence, and I must have something of whatever is going."

Mark Blackett-Ord's main virtue as a biographer lies in his use of unpublished letters in various archives, mainly the extensive Stuart Papers at Windsor Castle. He quotes from them more profitably than Lewis Royston did in his 1913 biography. Against this must be balanced his careless and cavalier use of sources, replete with misprints and eccentric name-spelling and his excessive reliance on the absence of factual evidence. Occasionally he produces patches of elegant writing. Altogether an erratic biography that echoes its subject's erratic life.

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His wife in England having died, he soon fell in love and married an Irish lady-to-waiting to the Spanish Queen, but had to become a Roman Catholic first. Whether in politics or in religion he converted easily. The English government was remarkably patient and sanguine in hoping that the errant duke might be reclaimed, but when he enlisted in the Spanish army to take part in the siege of Gibraltar (where he was wounded in the foot), enough was enough: he was indicted for high treason.

His Grace's disgraces

Robert Halsband

MARK BLACKETT-ORD

Hell-Fire Duke: The Life of the Duke of Wharton
252pp. Windsor: Kennal Press (distributed by Abacus Distribution Service). £12.50.
0 946041 02 4

It is not surprising that the Duke of Wharton, who occupies seven columns of the *Dictionary of National Biography*, should have been the subject of numerous biographies, fictional and factual. The first was published in 1731, the very year of his death; and its anonymous author, an "Impartial Hand", also described the duke accurately as "an illustrious, but a melancholy instance of the greatest Abilities and the most flagrant Indiscretions that ever met in the same Person".

Born in 1698, the heir of a powerfully rich Whig politician, he established his credentials for impudence by contracting a Fleet marriage at the age of seventeen to a fifteen-year-old girl of respectable enough family but not the grand heiress the world and his father thought he deserved. When his father died, soon afterwards, he found himself disinherited of all that was not entailed. He could still claim an ample enough income and the title of marquess. After a spell as a London rake, he went off on the Grand Tour, in Paris he was courted and seduced by the Jacobites, who were then recovering from their unsuccessful rising of 1715. He acknowledged his allegiance at Avignon when he knelt to accept the sovereignty of the Pretender (known to his followers as James III). As a reward he was given the empty and valueless promise of title to a dukedom. Back in London he resumed his rake's progress. After his mother's death, he inherited her estates in Ireland, where his Irish peerage allowed him to take his seat (though he was under age) in the House of Lords in Dublin—as a Whig. Either to stabilize his political loyalty or to reward his father posthumously the English ministry did create him Duke of Wharton. He was all of nineteen at the time.

In the early 1720s he was prominent

among the rakes of the Hell-Fire Club in London. When Wharton reached his majority he took his seat in the House of Lords as an Opposition Whig. There he opposed the bishops' bill against anti-religionists by reading from his family Bible to prove that the bill was repugnant to Holy Scripture. Then, before retiring to rustic Twickenham, he switched political allegiance to support the Court Whigs. He also became a Freemason—as a substitute for the Hell-Fire Club. In the curious opinion of Mark Blackett-Ord:

"His Twickenham neighbours included Pope and Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. Pope's genius, absorbing what he saw and heard, created the brilliant portrait in the moral essays beginning:

*Wharton, the scorn and wonder of our day
Whose ruling passion was the lust of praise.
(That theory is as good as any to explain the duke's instability.)* To describe his relationship with Lady Mary, Blackett-Ord invents a clumsy fiction when he writes that the duke and Lady Mary—in spite of her "famous unpleasant bodily odour"—"plunged into a tempestuous love-affair which was to last several years, but the details of which are sadly almost entirely unknown." She is called Wharton's mistress, who held the highest place in his affections, etc etc; and the biographer concludes: "So their lurid romance ended; sadly most details of it have been lost." To buttress this absurd concoction he writes that almost none of Lady Mary's letters from this period survive, overlooking the full series she wrote to her sister from 1721 to 1727, from which in fact he quotes:

"After the Twickenham interlude Wharton continued his gyrating political career, while his financial resources, severely depleted by losses in the South Sea Bubble, dwindled. In the House of Lords he defended the Jacobite Ansbury, who was sentenced to exile two years later he himself made his way to Vienna in a foolish attempt to enroll the Emperor Charles VI in the Jacobite cause. Then, after a spell at the Pretender's court in Rome, he was sent to Madrid, where he openly acted as ambassador. He pursued the chimerical notion that an alliance of Spain, Austria and Russia could put the Pretender on the English throne.

His wife in England having died, he

soon fell in love and married an Irish lady-to-waiting to the Spanish Queen, but had to become a Roman Catholic first. Whether in politics or in religion he converted easily. The English government was remarkably patient and sanguine in hoping that the errant duke might be reclaimed, but when he enlisted in the Spanish army to take part in the siege of Gibraltar (where he was wounded in the foot), enough was enough: he was indicted for high treason.

For the last three years of his miserable existence he wandered over Europe, trusted by neither the Jacobites nor the English, and destitute because his English agents were forbidden to remit any funds. He died at the age of thirty-two, and his wasted life was neatly summed up by Horace Walpole: "Philip, Duke of Wharton... comforted all the grave and dull, by throwing away the brightest profusion of parts on wit, fooleries, debaucheries, and scrapes, which may mix graces with a great character, but never can compose one."

If Wharton's place in political history is that of a freak, in literary history he plays a very small part. He served as the involuntary model for Pope's dazzling satiric portrait. He himself wrote some fugitive verse and a set of political essays in *The True Briton*, in 1723-24, supporting the Opposition. He may also have provided Edward Young, whom he patronized for a time, with some touches for *Locrine* in *Night Thoughts*. Blackett-Ord also suggests that Samuel Richardson, who printed *The True Briton*, may have used some details from Wharton for the character of Lovelace.

Mark Blackett-Ord's main virtue as a biographer lies in his use of unpublished letters in various archives, mainly the extensive Stuart Papers at Windsor Castle. He quotes from them more profitably than Lewis Royston did in his 1913 biography. Against this must be balanced his careless and cavalier use of sources, replete with misprints and eccentric name-spelling and his excessive reliance on the absence of factual evidence. Occasionally he produces patches of elegant writing. Altogether an erratic biography that echoes its subject's erratic life.

Swift oscillations

Judith Davies

EDUGENIO MONTALE

The Second Life of Art: Selected Essays
Edited and translated by Jonathan Galassi
354pp. New York: Ecco Press.
0 912946 84 9

It would not be easy (even if it were desirable) to try to fix the coordinates of Montale's literary criticism. Jonathan Galassi's selection spans a half-century, and some sense of process is natural. Readers who recall a comparable collection in translation, published in 1978, will be relieved to find the process made here more easily digestible by the inclusion of publication details and notes: to set a writer in his historical context is not to confine but to release him. Montale himself has talked of his "oscillante modo di pensare, una lancetta che non sta mai ferma né sul bianco né sul nero"; but this is his customary modesty, and itself a form of intellectual self-respect. His essays are the product of a passionate, wise and discriminating cultural saturation; and it is difficult to regret the fact that journalism had to become for Montale—to use the title of one of his essays—"a second profession". These are densely written pieces, un-Italian in the straightforwardness of their language, full of lightning cross-references, swift excursions into the fields of painting and music, and lending often to aphorism. Galassi improves on previous translations of Montale in preserving something of a style which is non-academic and conversational, yet urgent and precise too.

As with all Montale's contemporaries, Croce's influence makes itself felt. In some essays, the early "Style and Tradition", for example, or "The Magnificent Destinies", Neapolitan Idealism still faintly reverberates: the historical series tends to be seen as the self-explication of man's "destiny on earth", in which the responsible intellectual acts as monitor of change and link with tradition. "If automobiles were to disappear one day," Montale writes elsewhere, "what would remain as evidence of the automobile age would in fact be the poetry of today." Montale's critical terminology continues to attest the debt to Croce, though "Aesthetics and Criticism" (1962) is in the nature of a valediction to the philosopher. There are acknowledgements and doubts and then: "What most surprises us in [Croce] today is the defence of man's freedom and responsibility by a philosopher who had made man the transmitting antenna of the Spirit, thus denying the guilt of the guilty as well as the merit of the art."

There are pieces here on Pascoli, D'Annunzio and Campana, but there is nothing narrowly Italian about Montale (who has translated poets from Shakespeare to Yeats, and Guillén to Cavafy). For Montale the modern lyric tradition has travelled paths which wind, occasionally intersecting, from the Byron of *Don Juan* to Baudelaire, and then on to the symbolists and Valéry; from Coleridge and "un certo Browning" via Hopkins to Yeats and the Imagists; Valéry, Pound and perhaps Eliot are the last milestones Montale feels fully able to identify (and for "Uncle B" there are reservations: a great poet in "flashes" but still one who "has gazed at himself too much in the mirror"). With Auden, in an essay of 1952, judgments are already becoming more provisional. But where Montale has doubts others have dogma; tenderness is uncertainty, so affirmative.

It is with Auden too that the occasional piece betrays an oblique self-confession. For what faintly gleams in Montale is Auden's playing of *l'âme à l'âme*, or simply the harp of pure lyricism. Drawing threads together (one might conclude that what is meant by the Montalian term of "classicism") without residues of anything else into an objectively perfect form, which does not prevent a view of the poem as object, an autonomous unit made of solitude, and accumulation, and launched precariously on

the waters of time, occasionally to be drawn into the sea, haven of understanding (or misunderstanding); so Peter (says Montale's Nobel address) rescued Du Bellay.

In "Let's Talk About Hermeticism" the poet is defined as "one who works his own poem like an object, instinctively accumulating meanings and metaphorical meanings within the poem so as to make it the strongest, surest, most unrepeatable, most definitive correlative of his own internal experience". But this confident assertion dates from 1940. Galassi calls Montale "one of the great modern continuators of our humanist tradition", and one can see why; but it is a definition which is too generic, and perhaps too optimistic, to cover the Montale who emerged in the 1970s. Would the poet of the *Diario* and the *Quaderno* still have wanted to quote Tommaso Ceva to the effect that poetry is a "dream dreamed in the presence of reason"? These essays are certainly "selections from an unwritten intellectual autobiography", but the autobiography stops short of the strange, humiliated late poems which turned the previous condition of "permanent oxymoron" into a tic, courted the prosaic and the slangy, and pondered the expressive and communicative possibilities of language with disenchantment.

But it is hardly Galassi's fault if after 1955 Montale turned more to music criticism. This is a rich selection and the involvement with music of this base-baritone *manqué* does not go unrepresented. It appears not only in the terms of Montale's own self-analysis as poet (*Ossi di seppia* corresponding to "a need for musical expression", *Le Occasioni* being short on "piedi", on "profound music and contemplation..."); or in his "ear" as reader; but in pieces like "Words and Music", which is an entertaining examination of the "overwhelming bullying" that the operatic score usually metes out to language. Montale is even found, briefly, "On the Trail of Stravinsky". During the rehearsal period of *The Rake's Progress* Montale meets his librettist, and captures him beautifully and economically, especially later at the airport when Auden "nearly seizes Italian, takes [his] snapshot, repeats his admiration for Dante... jumps aboard the plane like a reubek... on his own poetry, Montale creates about himself a contemplative zone impenetrable to modernism; as interviewer — of Malraux, Brancusi, Braque, Char — he is detached, accurate, full of curiosity; and his impartiality can be more devastating than his wit. His *reportage* (like the two extended *bozzette* included here, "The Poet" and "The Intellectual") puts one in mind of lines from *Sestina*, written in characteristically underplayed celebration of his wife:

Erno Ingenti
quasi tutti i suoi sapevano
di essere loro il suo zimbello;
di essere visti anche al buio e smascherati
da un tuo senso infallibile, dal tuo radar
de pipistrello.

The division of this book into essays on "Culture and Society", on Italian and then Anglo-American writers; "Tributes" (to Bazin, Sbarbaro and Ungaretti, among others); "Observations and Encounters"; and finally "Interviews and Self-Criticism", is a homage to Montale's variousness, and an aid to assimilating what Montale's "solution" to the problem of tradition — involved an innovative appropriation of the Italian Literary past to serve his own very personal contemporary purposes. Nearer the mark is his description of Montale as "spokesman for the odd, uncooperative single man who insists on bearing witness to his own peculiar vision, whatever the consequences".

American Literary Scholarship: An Annual 1981, edited by James Wood, has recently appeared (549pp. Durham, NC: Duke University Press: \$37.75, 0 8223 0552 6). Part I comprises sections on individual writers, including Emerson, Thoreau, Melville; Part 2 is arranged chronologically and thematically to include topics such as Platonism: 1900 to the 1930s, Black Literature and Foreign Scholarship.

Far-flung jottings

Denis Donoghue

EDMUND WILSON

The Forties: From Notebooks and Diaries of the Period
Edited by Leon Edel
369pp. Macmillan. £14.95.
0 333 21212 6

Edmund Wilson approved of the project of publishing his notebooks and diaries. *The Twenties* and *The Thirties* were printed from typescripts he made for that purpose. Since his death in 1972, the work of deacidification has continued. But there are signs of strain. *The Forties* is only about half the size of *The Thirties*, and it has had to be eked out with jottings for the substantial laundry-bills. Wilson's diary-keeping was relentless till about 1935. When he started reading the material for *The Forties*, he let the diary drift. Historical research, fiction, journalism and marriage to Mary McCarthy kept him too busy for regular meditation.

To the Finland Station, published in 1940, got the decade off to a fighting start: it was followed by *The Wound and the Bow* (1941), *Notebooks of Night* (1942), *Memoirs of Hecate County* (1946) — which made him famous and enabled him to afford a divorce — and *Europe without a Baedeker* (1947). The diary was used mainly for jottings in far-flung places. In 1945 the New Yorker sent him to Europe to survey the consequences of the War: he went to London, Rome, Naples, Milan and Athens. His note-taking in these places was useful when he came to write up his stuff for the magazine and the book, *Europe without a Baedeker*. In December 1947 the New Yorker sent him to New Mexico to report on the exotic religious ceremonies of the Zunli. In 1949 he went to Haiti for the Reporter and sent back a remarkably naïve account of Haitian manners and morals. A revised version appeared, along with the Zunli

report, in *Red, Black, Blond and Olive* (1956). Visits to Tanglewood end, for divorce-residence. In Reno make up whatever gadding about clivens *The Forties*; otherwise, the Wilsons stayed at home, enjoying the sensuous life at Wellfleet.

It is not clear how much editorial selection has been exercised in making *The Forties*. The diary gives more than I have longed to know about Wilson's sexual performances: presumably he recorded only the big hits. I don't know whether the diary-entry in which he tells of going to a concert in Carnegie Hall — Ruth Posselt was the soloist in Samuel Barber's Violin Concerto — is one of several such entries or the only one of its kind. "And as I watched the sewing motion of her pretty round arm always held away from her body", Wilson reports, "and saw the bow moving straight across the bridge and eliciting the sweet and tender and either sentimental strains of the alleged first movement, I realized that violin music was intensely sexual and feminine, even when produced by a man, in the sense that it represents the feeling for a woman of the underpart of the penis lingeringly passing in and out and eliciting exquisite music."

The parties Wilson attended in Rome and other places sound needlessly boring: many of the recorded conversations are so bone-dry that I wonder how he disciplined himself to transcribe them. There are some new details. The "celebrated Catholic convert" who visited Santayana, according to *Europe without a Baedeker*, turns out to be Maritain. The man disguised in the same book as Sir Osmond Gower was Sir Ronald Storrs. But the jottings rarely add to what we already know from the books.

Besides, the most interesting bits have already been taken away for other compilations. *The Forties* were the decade of friendship between Wilson and Nabokov, but that matter is already fully documented in Simon Karlinsky's edition of *The Nabokov-*

Wilson Letters (1979). Wilson's dealings with F. Scott Fitzgerald, John Peale Bishop, Allen Tate, Malcolm Cowley, Wyndham Lewis, Auden and other writers are indicated far more fully and clearly in Elena Wilson's selection of her husband's *Letters on Literature and Politics* (1977) than in *The Forties*.

Leon Edel, the editor of these deacidified books, seems to have been intimidated by Wilson's well-publicized animadversions on heavy-duty editing. I can't otherwise explain why he has left no many details in the dark. One entry reads: "Stalin and Urban (?) See article in *Books Abroad*. Surely it is the editor's job, not mine, to dig out the relevant article in *Books Abroad* and explain Urban. Wilson didn't want to see professors engaging in unnecessarily heavy industry, but I don't recall that he wanted opaque details to be left in that condition. Nor do I think he favoured errors of transcription. Professor Edel has supplied evidence of an extremely damaging kind about his own textual work. He provides in *The Forties* a photo-copy of a page of hotel notepaper on which Wilson jotted down an account of his visit to a cinema in Miami. His transcription of this page is clearly inaccurate. Two words, "new" and "hung" — are omitted. The word "in" should be "on". A word he deems illegible is quite legible as "gags": "some good gags in this", Wilson says of a cartoon. A phrase Professor Edel transcribes as "like caricatures of the monstrous brass warehouses by Paul Marship and others in the Rockefeller Center buildings" doesn't make sense: "warehouses" is wrong, it should read "watchtowers". A tidied version of the same jottings became Wilson's letter of November 28, 1949, to his wife, printed in *Letters on Literature and Politics* — in which he refers to the cinema in Miami, "decorated with big metallic mythological figures like the Paul Marship bas-reliefs on Rockefeller Center".

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PETER YOUNG

Power of Speech: A History of Standard Telephones and Cables 1883-1983

221pp. Allen and Unwin. £9.95. £9.95.

0 04 382039 5

In 1876 Alexander Bell invented the telephone. Three years later the first public telephone exchange was set up in central London. In 1883 the American Western Electric Company set up a branch in Moorgate to market the telephone under the management of J. E. Kingsbury, a quiet Englishman with little technical training but a passion for telephones. It is the centenary of this company, Standard Telephones and Cables, that Peter Young celebrates in his densely detailed narrative.

It is difficult to make company histories exciting at the best of times, and this one is no exception. To be fair to the author, the book moves at a good pace, almost too fast indeed for the detail to be properly absorbed. But any signs of life in the narrative are extinguished by the nature of the subject and the narrow focus of the book. Coastal cables and superheterodyne receivers can only hold our attention for so long; so too can the stream of potted biographies of STC executives, many of whom, to judge by their business record, have been recalled here from a merciful oblivion. Nor is the rather arid subject-matter helped by the style in which Mr Young has

chosen to present it. The book is far too condensed for easy reading, bustling the reader along through a catalogue of undigested facts and faces. We are flooded with technical information and jargon that has not been properly explained, and have to put up with brief and often inept asides to place STC or telephones in their historical context. Here is the author's explanation for the boom in telephone demand in the 1960s: "External circumstances had changed in [the company's] favour. The effect of the Street Offences Act 1959 was to take prostitutes off the streets and put them on the phone, ushering in the permissive society of the Swinging Sixties."

All this is to be regretted, for this is an interesting story which raises numerous unexplored questions. Western Electric was one of a number of firms that prospered on the growing demand for telephones, but the British branch was one of the least successful of its multi-national ventures, reflecting the generally slow growth of electronics in Britain before 1914. In the 1920s the company was taken over by the newly formed International Telephone and Telegraph Company (ITT), the brainchild of the remarkable Behn Meyer, Hernand and Sosthenes. Under its new title, STC continued to grow (with a sharp set-back during the Depression) on the basis of Post Office business, which gave a guaranteed market to the big electrical firms for cable and exchanges. The business fortunes of the company were mixed, despite the benefits of having a large monopolist customer. The war helped, but it also encouraged excessive diversification, with the result that during the 1950s the

weaker product divisions dragged down the overall performance of the company, facing it with a serious crisis by the late 1950s.

The crisis also reflected the basic conservatism of STC's management. Although the firm was clearly part of a "new" industry, it was infected with all the poor salesmanship, stuffy managerial attitudes, poor quality research and inefficient organization of the older, declining industries. When the energetic H. S. Ganssen was appointed president of ITT in 1959 he ordered a complete shake-up of STC to make it operate like an American corporation. Aptitude tests were introduced for top British managers (only two "passed"), financial criteria were ruthlessly enforced, and the company was compelled to shed its conservative image and adopt more aggressive marketing and more modern methods of production and organization. The problems this posed were enormous. It is clear from Young's account that it took almost ten years for STC to adapt successfully to these pressures, by which time it had been overtaken in the main area of telephone equipment by GEC and Plessey.

In the 1970s the better attention to research and the trimmer, more sales-oriented structure, produced a sharp upward turn in STC's fortunes. It was able to benefit from the transition from electromechanical to electronics switching in the telephone system, and pioneered the new TXE44 and System X equipment for the Post Office. STC is now a business capable of taking its place in the Brave New World of Britain's market-place economy. To underline the change, ITT has recently sold its controlling

interest in STC to British shareholders to make it even more competitive with native British firms.

This history raises a number of interesting points. One of the most remarkable is the long time that it took for the telephone to spread in Britain. By 1914 there were twice as many telephones per head of population in Hawaii than in Britain. By the 1920s and 30s the telephone was still a luxury enjoyed by only a small part even of the middle classes. The Post Office and its supplier firms seem always to have been chasing the demand for telephones and never catching up. STC contributed to this with its slow pace of research and unadventurous business attitudes. In an age when nationalized industries are blamed for everything it is salutary to read the story of a large private firm just as culpable of technical mis-judgment, inefficiency

(brought about partly by the desire to protect a loyal but top numerous workforce), and managerial incompetence.

The same could not be said of the parent company, ITT. There are some interesting stories here of the agony and the ecstasy of multi-nationalism. In 1948 the ITT manager in Czechoslovakia was arrested by the new Communist authorities as an American spy and subsequently hanged. British and American personnel were arrested in Budapest and given long prison sentences for sabotage and espionage. STC's history has, regrettably, been much less exciting. Its new managing director, Kenneth Corfield, announced in the 1970s that his company "should aim to be the best company to work for in his country". On the evidence of this century history it can only get better.

End of the road

Jeremy Hardie

IVAN FALLON AND JAMES SRODES

DeLorean: The rise and fall of a dream-maker

418pp. Hamish Hamilton. £8.95. £24.110874

As this excellent book makes plain - and it is much to the credit of the publisher's bold libel lawyers that it should have appeared - John DeLorean was, by the time he came to build his dream car, megalomaniac, loquacious and insatiably greedy for cash. Ivan Fallon and James Srodes have done a magnificent job of detective work, and they succeed in making the technicalities clear in their full detail without slowing down the narrative of what is, in the end, an adventure story - a rare achievement for a book about business.

By the time he was arrested in a Los Angeles airport hotel on a charge of drug-smuggling, DeLorean had succeeded in costing the British Government £85 million and other, equally glibly, US private investors \$27m, of which nearly \$18m went into a Geneva company for purposes which remain doubtful. There was never any chance that the project would succeed. The market for an expensive sports-car was not really there in times of economic stringency and energy-saving. DeLorean's original fantasies, to embody his then current mad for safety and economy in a magnificent new vehicle with the 1930s appeal of the famous Mercedes Cullwing, had disappeared by the time the first test of assembled machines rolled off the line in Belfast. The first cars to arrive in the United States were described thus by Dick Brown, head of Quality Assurance: "It looked like somebody put a hand grenade in the front seat and the back seat and then set them off. All the guts were out. You could not ride in them. You looked in the window and all the components were just stuffed in. They were not built in. They were stuffed in." Almost all DeLorean's ideas had proved impracticable, certainly within the preposterous short time-table which he left himself between the busy signing of the deal with Roy Mason, in 1978, and his promised first delivery dates in 1980.

Could it all have been foreseen? It is quite easy to produce a ranking of the participants to show who were the most self-deluded. First, by a long way, came the politicians - led by Roy Mason, who in a five-minute meeting before dinner with Roy Hattersley peremptorily required the excellent John Freeman, Deputy Chairman of the Northern Ireland Development Association, to sign up at once, whatever his prudent doubts might be; and Adam Butler, whose House of Commons answers to the prostrating questions of Bob Cray and Jack Bruce-Gardyne now make sad and/or comic reading. There is an excellent photograph in the book showing Roy Mason sitting like a delighted small boy to the glamorous new car while DeLorean stands over him smiling with shared pleasure at the machine and at the extraordinary sop-thick which he is willing to pump out.

The photographs indeed are among the best things in the book. If you want to test yourself whether you would buy a brand-new car from this man, you have only to look at the 1973 photograph of a manically youthful DeLorean, with hair dyed jet-black, and his jaw jutting out from the prominent wire-frame of a Swiss surgeon had put in during his face-lift. Accountant, management consultants, and other such unimpressive people, who are paid to examine facts rather than fantasy, come out of the story very well. Bankers do rather poorly: they have quite sharp things to say about whether the deal made any sense at all, but the DeLorean and his henchmen they must have found it very difficult to resist the large sums of money involved. Although their fees and commissions are of course entirely above board, it must have been difficult to look coldly at deals where, for raising a net \$16 million, you earned \$2 million in fees.

But perhaps when it all went wrong was to the last two or three years of DeLorean's time at General Motors. A gauche and uncommunicative man, he took to a fashionable Californian lifestyle, combined with Ralph Nader-type criticism of the wickedness of the automotive industry, the need for safety, and other such nostrums. General Motors seem to have been remarkably tolerant; they even promoted him. It is characteristic of the motor-car business both here and in the United States that the foolish raw was not only a grave commercial mistake, or sexual misadventure, or mismanagement, but the prelude to a fund of releasing to the press the text of a speech on the future of the automobile industry which was meant to be kept strictly confidential to the inner circle of General Motors' executives. Had General Motors at that moment said to the world that DeLorean was to use the phrase of one of them later, "funky, you know, He has plain flipped out", all the subsequent problems might never have happened. As it was, he was bought off at huge expense; and the press in the United States was able to continue to pretend that DeLorean was a brilliant engineer whose innovative social and commercial ideas had simply been too much for stuffy old General Motors.

All his life James was conservative and anti-intellectual. Hearing at one of his evenings some undergraduates discussing general ideas, he rapped the table with his pipe and with a shade of irony said "No thinking, gentlemen, please!" At the time of his election as Provost of King's, E. M. Foster's mentor, Nathaniel Wedd, went around saying "We don't want James. James doesn't care for the intellect." Nor is it surprising that James took against the young Turk, Maynard Keynes, even though he was an Etonian. Keynes was to upset him by moving what were in effect votes of no confidence in the financial administration of the College. Even one of his closest friends, A. C. Benson, who said in the way some friends have, that James had the mind of a nice child, forecast that just as he had had no policy as Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, so he would have none as Provost. Policy meant rows and unseemly disputes.

From then on anyone of whatever school was welcome to his rooms. He still had some reservations. "Expecting three freshmen to supper shortly" he wrote to the widow of the friend he loved most, "I believe one to be a poet, one to be a philosopher, one to be a mathematician, one to be a scientist, one to be a statesman, one to be a lawyer, one to be a doctor, one to be a clergyman, one to be a soldier, one to be a sailor, one to be a farmer, one to be a craftsman, one to be a tradesman, one to be a merchant, one to be a banker, one to be a politician, one to be a statesman, one to be a lawyer, one to be a doctor, one to be a clergyman, one to be a soldier, one to be a sailor, one to be a farmer, one to be a craftsman, one to be a tradesman, one to be a merchant, one to be a banker, one to be a politician, one to be a statesman, one to be a lawyer, one to be a doctor, one to be a clergyman, one to be a soldier, one to be a sailor, one to be a farmer, one to be a craftsman, one to be a tradesman, one to be a merchant, one to be a banker, one to be a politician, one to be a statesman, 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The question of impartiality

Geoffrey Marshall

MAURICE PUNCH (Editor)
Control in the Police Organization
346pp. MIT Press. £27.
0 262 16090 0

Police studies, it seems to be agreed, are not in a very advanced or satisfactory state. Perhaps it is an act of faith for academics to suppose that there are sensible things to be said about policing or "the police organization". In general, as distinct from the policing of particular societies, nevertheless, sociologists at least have not been deterred from assuming that police sociology is as much a subject for inquiry as industrial sociology or the sociology of education. For one reason or another, however, many sociological studies of policing have focused on individual police behaviour or on relations between police officers, or with the public, rather than on police command structures or larger-scale questions of organization or control.

Maurice Punch has here edited the proceedings of an international seminar held in the Netherlands in 1980 that did concentrate on questions of control, posing the query "How do police forces police themselves?" Professor Punch has arranged the papers into several groups. They fall more or less under two headings. One group offers information about the operational or managerial techniques of particular forces - eg, the reduction of firearms use in New York, Atlanta and Kansas City, or the handling of assault charges in a British police force. The other raises issues that are perhaps of more interest to political scientists about the proper objectives of police forces and their relation to the societies in which they operate.

Youthful misdemeanours

D. J. West

MASUD HOGHUGH
The Delinquent: Directions for Social Control
317pp. Burnett. £15 (paperback, £6.95)
0 09 15068 8

This informative review of delinquency studies, culled by an assertive style and provocative commentary, derives from the author's dual role of lecturer and practitioner. The arguments seem on occasion more colourful than consistent: When not due to a certain fondness for hyperbole, the inconsistencies arise in part from an attempt to accommodate contradictory views and evidence while preserving a judicious, right-of-centre stance on most controversial issues. But they also stem from the fact, of which Masud Hoghugh reminds us repeatedly, that delinquency is a complex phenomenon with multiple causes requiring a variety of responses. It is not altogether unreasonable, therefore, to argue in one place (p. 29) that retributive punishment is "maybe the least effective and the most costly" means of reducing delinquency, while asserting later on (p. 280) that "judicial punishment is essential".

Hoghugh has a low regard for professional expertise, much of which is of the "emperor's clothes" variety, having no more substantial justification than lay opinion. He contends that undue respect for experts has discouraged politicians and ordinary citizens from asserting commonsense approaches. He forgets the prevalence of venal, indiscriminating and media-dominated public attitudes, although elsewhere he waxes eloquent on the role of the media and of politicians in fomenting public anxiety with sensational rhetoric. He goes too far in proposing a drastic reduction in the number of professionals - social workers, probation officers, criminologists, institution staff, etc. - who need criminals as sources of livelihood. Delinquents have to be handled by

Some questions of the second kind are: Through what kinds of institution should police forces be controlled or monitored? How can the effective conduct of police operations be reconciled with the maintenance of civil liberties when crime of all kinds is increasing? And how can policing be responsive to democratic control but independent of improper political influence?

Some of the comparative material suggests that cross-national generalizations can be dangerous. David Bayley offers the fascinating information that in Japan accused persons are induced to co-operate not by threats but by invoking feelings of mutual obligation. On occasion it appears that this system of organized police un-brutality, like its Western counterpart, can go too far. The Japanese Supreme Court found in one case that improper influence had been brought to bear on a suspect when the chief of a police station visited him and washed his back in the bath. The interpersonal reciprocal obligation created was so great that the suspect was deemed to have had no choice but to confess. Advocates of community policing in Britain have never gone to these extremes, and in any event it is just possible that such techniques would be less effective in Torquay or Greater Manchester.

The Dutch contributors report that in 1975 some radical reflection about the nature of the police function took place in the report of a Project Group on Organization. The group asked itself how the police could be integrated into the Community and serve society in a non-repressive role. Some of the Group's recommendations were for more use of internal police advisory groups. In Britain a milder philosophy of police-public integration has pointed in the direction of external consultative and advisory groups. But the limits of

consultation about operational policing remain to be worked out and have become something of an issue between the political left and right in British politics.

The notion of integrating police with the community indeed throws up a conflict between critical theorists of the police role and what for want of a better name may be called even more critical theorists. What the even more critical theorists tend to think about integration is that the police are already integrated but with the wrong bits of the community. Some who think this also think it inevitable, or at any rate natural, that the police in Western capitalist societies should hold repressive or conservative views. This implication might conceivably be drawn from Robert Reiner's paper, "The Politicization of the Police in Britain".

The argument of this essay is worth examining because Reiner has done valiant work in British police sociology and knows what he is talking about. None the less it is possible that the even more critical theorists could mistakenly use his work to make an unwarranted critical leap. They may take it as intended to refute the traditional claims made by senior British police officers that in enforcing the law they act impartially and without regard to political or partisan considerations or governmental convenience. Whether or not this claim is false, Reiner does not purport to show that it is.

His argument runs like this. Policing in Britain has become politicized for the following reasons. In the first place demonstrations, urban riots and terrorist activities are "informed by an explicit political consciousness". Second, routine street-level policing has become politically controversial. Third, police accountability has become a major party political issue

and has been the subject of proposed legislation. Fourth, the police have become actively engaged as a pressure-group in questions of social policy.

The first three suggestions amount to saying that rioters and demonstrators act from political motives, that some groups in society now regard the police with political hostility and that some politicians wish to bring them under greater political control. None of these propositions bears on the question of possible political or partisan activity or beliefs held by the police, since all of them relate to beliefs held by others about them. Whether police activity itself is political, Reiner continues, depends on the meaning to be attached to the term "political". The way in which we define politics. He cites two definitions which he labels Politics II and Politics I. Politics II is a narrow sense which relates to the special machinery of government and administration. In this sense the police are political but that tells us trivially that they are a part of the administrative system. Politics I is a wider sense. It means "the exercise of constraint in any relationship". In this sense the police are "inherently and inescapably political". But in this sense all-in-wrestling, or Wormwood Scrubs, or Bristol University are inescapably political, so politicization in these senses tells us nothing to the discredit of the police and has no relevance to their neutrality or partisanship. It is a third sense of politics, namely an inclination to political bias in carrying out their law-enforcement duties that is the relevant sense of politics for which evidence is required by those who dispute claims of police impartiality.

They may seek it in two further sets of considerations here mentioned. One is the possibility that the claim to impartial application of the law is true

but is only formally true, since rules are open-ended and their application involves discretion. The undoubted existence of such discretion of course tells us nothing directly about the way that discretion is exercised and Reiner adduces no evidence about it. What he does say is that a turning-point in police behaviour took place when Sir Robert Mark delivered his Dimsbley Lecture and later followed it with outspoken criticisms of Labour Party policy towards the police. This was followed by explicit Police Federation appeals to candidates at the 1979 General Election for stronger penal policies. The meaning of politicization then is that police are part of the machinery of administration; that their activities involve constraint; that they exercise a measure of discretion in law enforcement; that a retired Police Commissioner has socially conservative views; and that the Police Federation has openly expressed hard-line penal policies, and is opposed to crime and in favour of more and better-paid policemen. So clearly, whatever the truth may be about the official law-enforcement behaviour of non-retired Chief Constables and their subordinates, these conclusions say nothing about it and cannot be intended to provide evidence about the way in which law is enforced, or to show that enforcement has become politicized in the Politics II sense.

Much sociological investigation of policing in Europe and North America is in fact at odds with the assertion of some critical theorists that policing is invariably repressive and inescapably reinforces right-wing social policies. Many of the contributors to this book suggest that police forces can become aware of their patterns of customary behaviour and change them. The study of police is a kind of political anthropology and one of its functions is to tell the police what their customs are.

The work of retrieval

Patrick Maynard

MICHAEL PODRO
The Critical Historians of Art
277pp. Yale University Press. £15.
0 300 02862 8

In a significant passage quoted in Michael Podro's new book (one of more than ninety translations in the text with extensive quotations from the German originals in the notes), the young Heinrich Wölfflin wrote, apparently to Burckhardt, about his ambitions on finishing his doctoral degree. He outlined a project for what Professor Podro calls a "critical or interpretative history" of art, based on a psychological approach rather than on (that of) philology or general cultural study. "What can be achieved through philological methods is shown by archaeology. Someone who can combine archaeology with the study of the mind will achieve a great deal," he wrote: something that may be called *seelenkunde*.

Besides Wölfflin, who features in two of its central chapters, *The Critical Historians of Art* treats of the diverse projects of seven other German-speaking art historians who, according to Podro, form the core of a distinctive art-historical tradition of "strong internal coherence", stretching back almost to Hegel - who figures as a proto-critical historian - and forward to Panofsky, with whom it ends. The tradition, spanning roughly a century, includes both illustrious and less well-known names: Schnaase, Semper and Oßler, Springer, Riegl, Wölfflin, Warburg, and Panofsky. The book is structured on a three-square grid, covering (roughly) three generations and three critical historical projects: that focus on teleology, on motifs, and (at some distance off) on social history (under the inspiration of Schiller).

At times it is questionable how well this grid organizes the discussions the

book contains. *Critical Historians* is, as its author states early on, an essay in the history of ideas, and tends to be relaxed about biographical details. Oßler, for example, is given only a publication date, whereas Springer enjoys several dates just for his birth. One gets a firm sense of three generations of thought culminating in the 1890s, but the nonspecialist will find the chronological marking insufficient, as attention is given to many seemingly fresh starts on subtle points of interpretation of the specific projects pursued by individual art historians, of their inter-relationships, and of their philosophical predecessors, such as Kant, Schiller, Herder, and Hegel. To borrow one of Wölfflin's famous polarities, despite some dauntingly many efforts at firm outline, one is engaged here with a predominantly painterly handling of ideas. Like the edge of a face in a Rembrandt etching he discusses, the contours of Podro's discussion may prove elusive, as themes disappear and recur in slight, deft touches throughout his expositions of particular texts.

A central theme is that of critical history itself, which Podro opposes to "archaeological" history of art in a distinction echoing Wölfflin's own. The term "critical" is meant to have a Kantian, self-critical ring - not, as might be supposed, to signify a disposition to judicial evaluation. The general project of this modern critical approach, for which Podro finds many parallels outside German Letters, is an understanding of art which combines what appear to sceptics as two incompatible motivations. The first of these is - in defiance of well-known versions of formalism, from Kant down to the present - to represent works of art as fully historical creatures, "inextricable", as Podro says, from the feltwork complexity of circumstance: patronage, usage, technique, religious beliefs, etc. The second is to treat artworks as always "irreducible" to any such set of historical circumstances. But this negative condition is not sufficient to distinguish the critical

approach from the "archaeological" one, for it might be satisfied by a modest "archaeological" programme which did not propose to give insightful interpretations of its subjects as works of art. Podro's critical historian must satisfy a third requirement: "allgemeinen Standpunkt" - some very general and inclusive conception of art which regards works of art as effects of artistry, separate from natural objects and other artifacts. Although listed as a critical historian and much discussed along the way, Burckhardt, for example, receives no separate treatment in the book, perhaps because of his weakness on this point.

Critical history thus requires the critical creativity of the theorist, as well as the understanding and skills of the scholar. The problem of devising and applying any such general and inclusive conception of art is the problem of the critical "retrieval" of works of art from history, a "retrieval" which may, in the case of Wölfflin for example, tend towards formalism but which, according to the requirement of "inextricability", must never lapse into it.

Podro makes the interesting suggestion that the solution of this problem was thought to lie in the elaboration of different conceptions of visual artistry, which link all art, whether fine, applied, or decorative, to the exercise of the mind's freedom; freedom from internal restraints, as well as from those imposed by nature and society. This Kantian idea is incorporated in a general conception of the entire Western tradition of art which views artistry as (in a term most important to Podro) the active "transformation" of given materials, conventions, and experiences. Early in this century Riegl wrote that "man, in a state of culture, finds a purely passive role toward the world of objects by which he is completely conditioned; and he sets out to regulate his relation to it, to make that relation

one of independence and autonomy; he does this... by means of art (in the widest sense of the word)..." Riegl, like Semper and others, imagined this to be achieved by the construction in art of alternative worlds and orders. With Schnaase, Podro identifies this desire for freedom as a motive behind the search of modern art for a programme of autonomous development of visual forms relatively liberated from historical conditions.

When an emphasis on art as a vehicle for some sort of free activity is connected with an account of the beholders' activities which incorporates reference to theories of perception, the contributions of this nineteenth-century tradition to practical art criticism become clearer. Podro shows how our habits of formal analysis of compositions have developed from these sources, whatever our ignorance of their background. Two important dualities which still bedevil our thought about all the arts were confronted throughout the tradition. The first is that which contrasts the material and the image it bears; the second opposes the combination of material and image in a work of art to the activities of the mind in interpreting it. The interpretive inventions of the critical historians seem consistently to have borne upon these topics. For Hegel the relationship to the viewer was already explicitly part of the content of visual art, and Podro shows how Riegl developed this idea in his writing on the "exterior unity" of Dutch portraiture. Semper showed how technique can become part of

design, how the materials or construction may themselves be themes of the "self-illuminating" work of art. Later, drawing on the perceptual aesthetic of Hildebrand, Wölfflin proposed the equivalence or interplay of material and subject matter in our perception as a potential mediator of these dualities.

Retrieval, transformation, and freedom are a few of several themes discussed by Michael Podro. Viewed reflexively by its own criteria, *Critical Historians* offers us a valuable set of historical "retrievals": the retrieval of little known names and themes for the history of art history, of German texts which have hitherto been translated into English, and - closer to the author's own meaning of the term - the attempted "retrieval" of a tradition of thought which has in a way been lost to us while still exerting an influence. Whether or not there is currently a "crisis" in art history, it is important to examine critically the backgrounds of views, attitudes, and practices which have such effects. This is a sophisticated book, not part of the still unwritten history of art history which the field needs in an introductory level, but something necessary to it. Although what may be said of past art history is not necessarily what may be said of past art, the author has, by his own terms, "absorbed" the thought he treats of so far into his own that the book gives evidence against the very scepticism it addresses - scepticism about the possibility of historical retrieval that is not merely external or "archaeological".

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Ancient, Medieval and Modern
by ERNST BREISACH

This pioneering work arises out of Ernst Breisach's realization that history, the discipline identified with reflection on the past, has no comprehensive account of its own historical career. In the late twentieth century, when there is much talk about a crisis of historiography, this state of affairs is more than just an annoyance: it sometimes leads historians themselves to make *ad hoc* judgements on the nature and theory of history that fall to take into account the problems of historiography historically.

In this work, Breisach presents an effective, well-organized, and concise account of the development of historiography in Western culture. Neither a handbook nor an encyclopedia, *Historiography* outlines and interprets the main lines of development of the discipline, from its origins in Greek poetry to the present. For it is only in the context of the whole of Western historiography's development, the author contends, that we can truly fathom the role and nature of history as a human endeavour.

From this survey, the development of historiography emerges as a story whose plot was devised by the course of Western culture itself and whose concern to reconcile the past with the present and the future demonstrates a perennial link between history and human life. Breisach's monumental work thus not only serves, to display the richness of the discipline and to provide an understanding of the historiographical view of past generations, but also gives proof that history is an enduring endeavour inextricably bound to the structure of Western life.

488 pages, August 1983, £28.00 cloth; £10.80 paperback

TWENTIETH-CENTURY FRENCH LITERATURE

1920-1970

by GERMAINE BRÉE

In her survey of French literature from 1920-1970, Germaine Brée demonstrates that to understand the literature of that period we must consider it in its social and historical context. After an overview of the historical, political, and social climate in post-World War I France, Brée examines the literary life. She focuses on the intellectual currents that affected literature - those in painting, cinema, popular culture, linguistics, psychoanalysis, and philosophy - and ends with the development of the novel, poetry, and theatre. Brée anchors her analysis on eight authors whose work she feels is emblematic of the time: Cocteau, Breton, Malraux, Céline, de Beauvoir, Camus, Duras, and Simon. *Twentieth-Century French Literature* includes a Dictionary of Authors that provides bibliographic as well as biographical information, and a revised bibliography. Translated by Louise Guiney.
390 pages, August 1983, £20.00

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD

A flair for faces

Peter Greenham

DORINDA EVANS
Mather Brown: Early American Artist in England
277pp with 160 black-and-white photographs and 9 colour plates.
Harper and Row. £16.50.
08195 5969 8

Mather Brown was born in New England in 1761 when the colonies were freeing themselves. His father was a clockmaker who, on the death of his wife, entrusted Mather at the age of two to her half-sister. Both Copley Fielding and Gilbert Stuart were pupils of the family and their example, influencing his own longing for adventure, carried him to the West Indies to paint miniatures, then at the age of twenty, across the Atlantic, first to France and at last, with a letter of recommendation from Benjamin Franklin for the President of the Royal Academy, to England, where he came under suspicion of being a rebel and republican; but not for long.

In less than ten years, he was portrait painter to the Duke of York, Benjamin West, who let students of the Academy come to his rooms for advice, foretold that Brown "would soon make a figure in his profession". He was handsome and lively, to his sitters wanted to please him; and he wanted to please them. But for him it was not enough to do a portrait. He hoped to take his place with historical and religious subjects such as West and Copley Fielding. Americans who had also copied Hogarth, Mary Queen of Scots being his last sentence. Henry VIII, christened the Battle of Trafalgar, the death of Nelson, the son of Tipu taking leave of the Zahir, Louis XVI taking leave of his family, Lord William Russell taking leave of his neck were the topics which excited his ambition.

But good fortune left him in middle-

age. He went from town to town, from Bristol to Liverpool, from Liverpool to Manchester, taking some huge canvases such as Louis XVI's farewell with him for exhibition. In 1815 he wrote to his aunt in America and told them he would destroy his pictures if he could no longer pay for their storage. The artist, whom he had told of his successes, heard less and less from him, and nothing during the last years, which he spent in a boarding-house in London, secretive, disconsolate, a mystery to the landlady who wept over him at his end.



A detail from Mather Brown's painting of John Adams, reproduced from the book reviewed here.

disaster, a grace of grouping, and a pattern of light and shadow which Brown was never able to achieve in his crowded histories.

The truth is that Brown, though he learnt so much from West, overlearned how to compose well. Miss Evans says of the "Findings of Moses" that Brown knew, or thought he did, what it was to be a deserted infant. An artist needs more than a heart in the right place; the less Brown has to do in the way of bringing order to a picture, the better he is. A single figure is better than two or three; a head and hands is better still; and best of all is a head and outdoing more. In a head or face his own candour and good nature triumph.

If, as at least one critic believes, there was a rule of thumb, based in the Golden Section, which European painters applied, Brown never knew it. The sumptuous tumble of robe and curtain in which Reynolds enhances the suavity and stance of his nobles has the grace and order of a Gothic arch. Brown's royal coats look as if they were striding a pose in front of an unmade bed. But the particularity which made it hard for Brown to design a picture, even with only one figure, helps him give his sitters the look which they and no other individual could have had. Though well-wishers often tell a portrait-painter that a likeness is not important, and who will be able to tell, anyway, in a hundred years' time, it is still true that certain artists, of whom the greatest is Holbein, convince you that their portraits are like (not for the reason once given by C. S. Lewis, that there can be no other explanation of such ugly faces), and that the likeness is not to be separated from the quality of the picture but is part of it. Some of Brown's portrait drawings, which he used for the paintings, are brisk, hardy and humane; they are not only, as Miss Evans says, his masterpieces, but also the expressions of a character, frank and independent. If he had a theme, it lay not in those voluptuous and declamatory farewells, but in the plain face.

someone, and it is better for the task to be done by persons with some experience. Medical doctors are equally parasitic upon the sick, but the aim should be to improve their efficiency, not to cut off support.

Research workers come in for criticism for the use of "scarce resources" either to demonstrate the obvious or to pursue academic abstractions that become "ever more abstruse and unusable". Moghugh would like research to concentrate on the evaluation of practical policies. Continued explorations of the familiar social adversities associated with delinquency are unnecessary, for these are not, in his opinion, the essential causes. Nevertheless, he draws heavily upon such findings where it suits his argument.

Hoghugh has no sympathy with the "pure sophistry" of those who suggest that the apparent rise in juvenile delinquency is merely a reflection of the increasing intolerance of authorities who find it easier to make children scapegoats than to deal with the tensions to adult society. He finds such arguments "full of special pleading, partisan and wholly irresponsible - of being satisfied by equivocal evidence". Yet the statistics in support of a vast new wave of juvenile crime are, as he admits, open to other interpretations. Consistent with his right-of-centre stance, he thinks much of the increase is real, and not just a moral panic, but warns against the dangers of over-reaction.

There are points of detail open to dispute. For example, it is emphasized (p. 58) that research findings on the characteristics of offenders - such as their somewhat lower than average performance in intelligence tests - refer only to those who have been caught, who may well be untypical. This ignores the growing evidence from self-report studies which suggest that, despite of uncaught, the characteristics of persistent delinquents are the same. Furthermore, nearly all of them are apprehended sooner or later.

One particularly valuable feature of this book is the frank portrayal, based on experience, of the Kafkaesque

horrors sometimes encountered by delinquents and their families at the hands of police, social workers, lawyers, magistrates and penal institutions, all of whom occasionally operate in an arbitrary, dictatorial, inhuman and imperfectly controlled fashion that serves only to confirm the antipathy of the socially alienated to all forms of authority. These comments are all the more impressive for being accompanied by criticism of the excesses of media representation, such as the film *Scum*, portraying life in the brutalities and fogging of the past. Hoghugh believes that improved child training and the inculcation of a sense of personal responsibility would make an important contribution to prevention. Middle-class parents are in

practical recommendations. These are scattered throughout and summarized at the end. In common with all serious specialists he is aware of the marginal effect of criminal justice. The delayed and uncertain punishments dispensed by the courts are trivial in comparison with the physical and psychological deprivations suffered by chronic delinquents in the course of their everyday life. The shorter, sharper shocks which the present government wants to see delivered are no more likely to prove remedial than the brutalities and fogging of the past. Hoghugh believes that improved child training and the inculcation of a sense of personal responsibility would make an important contribution to prevention. Middle-class parents are in

a better position to do this than the less fortunately placed, who are distracted by economic and social problems. He would like disadvantaged parents to be given more help and encouragement to control and supervise their children rather than have them taken away. He thinks schools should pay more attention to the less academic types who cause most of the trouble and that they should be made to undertake training in citizenship, personal and life skills and concerns beyond the hours of classroom attendance. He believes in neighbourhood self-help and the control of vandalism and the like. The interventions of distant bureaucrats. He thinks youngsters should be made to accept responsibility for their actions by adjusting official punishments in proportion to the gravity of the offence. To dress up the punishment of removal from home under the guise of welfare by calling it a "care order" is hypocritical and confusing.

The much derided medical model, according to which a significant proportion of delinquents are emotionally disturbed and in need of psychological understanding and help, receives little consideration. Hoghugh acknowledges that pure justice must be tempered by some allowance for the special weaknesses and problems of delinquent children, but it is only when he writes about the work of institutions - of which he has great experience - that he gives really serious and sympathetic attention to treatment needs. Otherwise, his chapter on treatment is curiously ambivalent. He recognizes the desirability of constructive, humane approaches, but points out how costly and ineffective many schemes have proved. He pleads for greater realism and attention to the needs of delinquents rather than to the convenience and security of the adult world. He is not much taken in charge, but he has not much faith in the chronic misbehaviour of well-being. He even suggests that "perhaps we should seriously consider the value of treatment. In terms of producing well-adjusted, if not positively happy, delinquents!" Here he and I must part company.

Hush

Shh. Sizzle of days, weeks, months, years...
How much of us has gone, rising and crying.
My skin seeps its pond of dew.

Air slips and flits as I walk out today
In the transparent month of the weather
When the first leaves are greening.

Behind me I can hear
A click of fantasy heels;
But there is no one there.

She is with me, as I call to see
A tick friend whose skin is drying
On the bones of her split.

I stand on the red threshold with my flowers.
How old this is, and how the heart beats faster
As I walk at the bell like a mourning woe.

At the dog barks, as I give my flowers
And a secret wind blows in from eternal woods
As my flower sighs, asking for water.

Douglas Dunn

remainders

Eric Korn

How numberless are the boons that have been showered upon all orders of Society by what we might call the Book Fair Movement—making it sound akin to those nineteenth-century reformers like the Rational Dress League, the Sunday Society (they favoured Sabbath opening of museums and the dabbling sort of art galleries), the Total Abolition (of Scotland) Crusade! Like the secular gospel of literacy, bibliographic awareness and a modest annual return on investment through every Drill-Hall, Assembly Rooms, Jubilee Hotel and Armoury throughout this land and our sister states across the seas.

If there has perhaps been any minute compensating disadvantage, it is that expertise and consequent expense have been spread a touch too far and wide. Whereas the provinces previously existed for the metropolitan bookseller to visit and plunder, returning with his shooting-province laden with unrecorded provincial imprints and unrecognized pseudonymous rarities for which the grateful hayseed or hec has taken penitence ("Thank ee, Muster Metropolitan Bookseller, zurr: Y'all come back real soon, hear?") we are now all of us reduced to the status of assistants in the global village bookshop, with distressingly rapid access to specialist knowledge and prices. I have warned you again and again about the dangers of adopting, in a trade whose heart is obsolescence; such modern devices as the electrical computing machine, the steam-press, the biro (TM); but my Cassandra-oracles (TM) have been ignored. See the consequences: there are nearly no non-specialist booksellers any more, and no non-specialist books.

Client comes into promises with half-a-dozen *Vladimir Shvetsky's Modern Method for the Thug and Foxglove* for sale and you send him on his way with a sneer: next day he comes back and says he thought you would like to know (see my 800 things to say to booksellers) that he'd offered them to Quicksilver Quotations of Covent Garden and they had snapped them up with cries of gratitude and a tonner apiece, just the thing for the Semiotics of Stoke Newington U. Meanwhile the fiction department of the Royal Institute of Nursing would like to study hospital romances, and some book-seller is buying 100,000 titles for them, and a private collector in Essex needs to complete his collection of variant printings of Old Moore's, Foulham's and Farguson's Almanacs. From time to time one is visited by a superscout, a sort of high-grade pimp actually, who knows who is short of what and how badly they need it. "Anything on mink-farming since 1940 or penicillin before 1949? Any of Alfred Austin's prose works, *Round the Horn With Romany Agan*, but only in blue cloth? Incunables from Toledo, Toulouse or Briot? Anything on diverticulosis, Eh? M. Dell in Paris, anything on seaweed as fertilizer on any of the Channel Islands—save Herm, rty, not Vrac, Vrac, Vrac: *Songs of a Sark Maiden*, he's already got that!" When they leave, usually empty-handed, you look at your books with fresh contempt and feel—as though you have been checked out and passed over by the entire Seventh Fleet.

Other people's shelves offer no relief. What looks like the final reject pile, containing, say, *All Outlets of the Story of the Blomquist Family*, *Our Carling Tour Through Alberta and Crowned Echoes: the Story of the BBC in Coronation Year*, turns out to be awaiting collection, urgently required by *Relatively Speaking*, *Rhine-dink Books* and *Volume Control* bookeramas that cater respectively for the genealogy, hockey and allied skills, and radio-history markets.

It is quite rare to find the sort of cool dusty basement with a million books where every volume is thirty pence, uncollocated, and without fly-leaf references—"Zamenhof 486", "Froom-Jenkin's A binding", "Not in Terwilliger", references which only tell you that someone out there has already nuzzled everything on tea-tasting or Arminianism. ("Terwilliger" turns out to be a collection of the hundred best

books published in February, so "not in T" is a parish distinction, particularly as you know that Terwilliger only got to ninety-six before they carried him off to Hotel Hebeplein.)

When you do find such places you rapidly wish you hadn't, places with books that mock the theory that every book has a customer if you wait long enough, books stillborn a century ago and decomposing since, books so dull I cannot even name them, books that you keep on returning to, like a desert wanderer circling a mirage, each time discovering anew that it is the wrong George Herbert or lacks the frontpiece and chapter nine, places where you emerge haggard and hopeless after several hours with a copy of a school magazine where you vaguely remember that Lou MacNeice was a supply-teacher in the 1940s and might have written the First XI reports, books with stimulating titles like *Early Days in the Gambia* or *Pierce Fights in Tulki* which turn out to be missionary narratives of the kind that don't even tell you what she died of but what hymn she requested as she departed, lives of eminent preachers—there's one called *Lax of Poplar*, which sounds like a newspaper lexicographer, Lax of Poplar, Disgruntled of Broadstairs, Tired of Reading (God, yes!).

*** Spare an uncharitable thought, if you will, for Theophilus Swift, possibly the least nimble character (I shall get letters vindicating him) in Regency Dublin. He came my way through a copy of *The Touchstone of Truth*, third edition, or more fully, *The Touchstone of Truth; uniting Mr Swift's Late Correspondence with the Reverend Doctor Dobbin and His Family; and the detailed account of their subsequent challenge and imposture. Third Edition; enlarged with several new remarks and observations by Theophilus Swift, Esquire. Jubent reuovare dolorem Virg.* DUBLIN 1811. (The two previous editions have different though equally curious titles.) The Correspondence, which is presented with three prefaces, two introductions, a Structure, an Advertisement, a Challenge, five Appendices, a Postscript, demonstrates a most sustained persecution of the unfortunate Dobbin, whose offence was not to marry, or, respectively, wish their daughter / sister / kinswoman to marry this ancient and quarrelsome buffoon.

Theophilus had had some practice: the son of Doane (sic) Swift, who was Deane's wife, as it happens, he was born in England in 1746 and moved to Dublin on receipt of a legacy, where, says DNB, "his eccentric opinions and habits attracted attention". He had previously written a pamphlet on Colonel Lennox's duel with the Duke of York, that had led him into a duel with Colonel Lennox. In which Swift was injured. He abused the faculty of Trinity College for failing to honour his son, "the dearest led in all Ireland". The Faculty replied in kind and there was a trial after which both Swift and one of his victims were jailed for libel on each other. In 1805 he conceived himself to be enamoured of, and then engaged to, the unfortunate Emma Dobbin.

Hear, Emma, Hear! The Vow comes withered with a gushing Delightful drop. If thou accept the strain! A drop of Pleasure in a Point of Pain! His asterisks, not mine, they are justified in a characteristic footnote: "having lost the paper on which I had set down these lines when I returned home, I have depended for their correctness on a memory that was false; a good one. At the end of five years, every hour of which has been edged by some keen reflection, or barbed with some bitter thorn, I may be allowed to forget some Evanescent Verses." Somewhere between 1805 and 1807 Miss Dobbin, if she had ever considered herself engaged, came to consider herself disengaged and became affianced to a Reverend Lefanu, one of the literary Lefanus, Swift, reasonably, felt himself slighted and, eccentrically, concluded that his home was impugned since unless Miss Dobbin, avowed that she had

abandoned him, he would be thought to have abandoned her. She chose silence, an error with Swift, who had a marvellous skill at creating no-win entanglements and finding secondary grievances.

He wrote her what he describes as a "hasty but affectionate" letter (there is an appendix explaining the reasons for his haste and the conclusions which may and may not be drawn from it) saying that if the report was true he wanted his previous letters back. "That I may not be misunderstood I would say explicitly that having besought her to return my letters should be true to her Reservation on them implied and gave me reason to conclude that she was not preferring another."

Dobbin senior writes back to say explicitly that Swift is not going to have his daughter. Swift replies that this is not explicit enough. Emma Dobbin writes to say that she is not going to marry him, and returning his letters. Swift publishes the letters with sardonic commentary ("My friends are now in possession of Miss Dobbin's talent as a letter writer. They will not wonder that I was delighted at her correspondence . . .") and issues a series of involved challenges: "ninthly, What was the reason that when she positively declined the Proposal she did not positively decline the Contract?" A member of the family sends him a challenge, to which he replies in suitable terms. Then realizing it is a hoax, he sends a letter asking for his reply back. The family returns the second letter, not the first, which dishonourable conduct is denounced at length. He deals with another abusive letter in a magisterial way: "You are in your second childhood? So I was when I proved for seven years my fidelity to an undeserving woman. You have told her, are well known to be certain individuals of a family whom she would be very

It will not be denied, I suppose, that English and Anglo-Saxon, are, at least, sister-languages, and if so, are the offspring of a same parent, at one stage of existence an identical language. And if we believe (which I do) the Anglo-Saxon and the Low Saxon (still surviving, in the main, in what we now call the Dutch) were

sorry I should name." He resigns her to Lefanu in a letter full of malice; Lefanu gets the girl, and Swift is sent a piece of wedding cake. Swift, unconscious of pathos, reprints that accompanied the cake with a final footnote: "The Bride-Cake was surmounted with a Trophy of White Ribbon." So next time chaps beam on the passing of Swiftian pamphleteering, let them think whether they'd like this kind of treatment, which word processors could no doubt issue at a fearful rind. Though without the White Ribbon.

*** Loomer than Theophilus was John Bellenden Ker, who wrote *An Essay on the Archology of English Popular Phrases and Nursery Rhymes*. (Southampton and London 1834). The good news is that it is the first scholarly study of the Nursery Rhyme. The bad news is that it is demented. Rather in the manner of *Mots d'heure*, *Gueznes*, *Raines*—but he means it—or the contemporary scholar who appears to maintain, if I've been following him, that the Hebrew Bible is actually in Greek. Ker believes that nursery rhymes and many popular expressions are ignorant peasant corruptions of Low Dutch originals, meaning something quite different, mostly satirical attacks on the rapacity of the Reformation clergy. He uses Dutch, which he knows, more or less, as an approach to Anglo-Saxon, which he doesn't. (A bit like searching for a lost car under the light because you've never found it over there in the dark.) What he says is clear enough.

There was an old woman who lived under the hill
And if she is not gone she lives there still.
Daer Wasse een ouwel-wijf hummed luid
Aen der Heer hilde
End of sij is naamt ge on, sij he's deer still.

"There you hear rise a holy-water-humming noise in honour of the Lord Pantry. And if it is not paid for the holy-water-chanters would rather be quiet (not give themselves the trouble of mumbled over their church-office for nothing)."

Morevoer, like all politically-conscious periodicals *Past & Present* is much given to re-examining its functions and purpose, and in this case its range. The gist of the editors at what they saw as its poor coverage of non-European areas was voiced in the fifteenth issue, in 1971—though why a British periodical should not legitimately focus its attention on Britain is difficult to understand—and it has led to the acceptance of such outside titles as "Forced and Free Labour in Late Colonial Potosi", or "Elopement and Seduction in Nineteenth-Century Cuba", or "Abyssinian Feudalism". An uneasy trendiness dictated the inclusion of things like "Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England", or "Presbyterianism and 'Modernisation' in Ulster". A few articles are slipping through censored, the most horrid jargon, and the journal as a whole seems to alternate between broad surveys adumbrating tentative examinations of relatively unimportant phenomena sharply and narrowly defined as to time and place. Two articles in this hundredth issue, "The Mass as a Social Institution 1200-1700", and "The Rightboy Protest in County Cork 1785-1788", handily illustrate both trends.

This intellectual muzziness has blunted the journal's impact, and it has never seriously threatened the established learned journals, though the 1950s and 1960s, with their collapse of professional confidence in the humanities, seemed that their hour had struck. *Historical Journal*, having the advantage of the backing of the Cambridge History Faculty, leads the parade. Perhaps it is time for another palace revolution?

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the same language, our own must at one period have been as these once were, also the same language.

Do not delay over-long near that stringently migrainous sentence, but drill yourselves on these simple examples of the Ker technique. "BLUE DEVILS = blood-devils g.e. bad blond; DEAD AS A DOOR-NAIL = dood nls er doornagel g.e. dead as if pierced through and through; HEAD OVER HEELS = heet overle g.e. hotly over-hasty; HE LAUGHS IN HIS SLEEVE = hij luffe in hyr lufde g.e. he is basely deceived on the score of affection; IT IS ALL MY ARSE IN A BAND-BOX het is al me nes in een beender-box g.e. it is altogether no more than carnal leg shrine, however showy this state-coffin may be, it contains but mere carnal after all; and thus notwithstanding your display of words, or promises, I put no value upon them, knowing them to come from a worthless person; one underserving of my confidence."

I think we are now ready to undertake one of the nursery-rhymes. All are quotable; but fond as I am of "Ryd er Chack-hors! Toe ban byrte kruys: Ride your Cock-horse (your people; parishioners). Bestow upon them the curse of cruel vexation!", and "Bat er keck, Bat er keck, Bekers-nest: Put a bold face on it, be assuming in your claims, my man of theump; I think the palm must go to number XXVII:

There was an old woman who lived under the hill
And if she is not gone she lives there still.
Daer Wasse een ouwel-wijf hummed luid
Aen der Heer hilde
End of sij is naamt ge on, sij he's deer still.

"There you hear rise a holy-water-humming noise in honour of the Lord Pantry. And if it is not paid for the holy-water-chanters would rather be quiet (not give themselves the trouble of mumbled over their church-office for nothing)."

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'Essays on Fiction'

Sir, Valentine Cunningham, in an admirable review of Frank Kermode's *Essays on Fiction 1971-81* (July 22), remarks that "Nowhere . . . is Kermode very precise about where the amorality, let alone immorality, of the new criticism really resides". As a step towards such precision, I would propose that the immorality has everything to do with an irresponsible use of gallicisms. An example comes later in the same review when we are told that in Kermode's view "instituted" literary criticism (eg. in the universities) "does important sanitary work by 'recuperating' the salvageable judgment and 'neutralizing' the silly or wrong one". It's not clear whether it is Kermode or Cunningham who takes responsibility for this use of "recuperating"; what is clear is that the use has far more to do with French *recuperation* than with English "recuperation". Such usage, which is staple procedure in the criticism Cunningham has in mind, is immoral because gratuitously obfuscating. It is dishonest because it presents as English what in fact is *franglais*—a language for which no dictionaries exist. "Neutralizing" is a similar barbarism, and it is not hard to guess at the French word that lies behind it. Is it possible to think clearly, or communicate responsibly in a lingo which neither honest French nor honest English?

DONALD DAVIE.
Omega Cottage, 4 High Street,
Silverton, N. Exeter.

E. H. Carr

Sir,—*De mortuis nihil nisi veritas*. But the truth about E. H. Carr is obviously so painful to Alec Nove, who shares many of his illusions and ambiguities, that instead of addressing himself to the substance of the case, he indulges in his letter (June 24) in polemical references and sophistries. Nove disapproves of my having "dragged in [sic] . . . every mistake and misjudgment Carr ever committed". But I do not share Nove's pieties and see no reason why, now that the totality of Carr's writings can be assessed, his mistakes and misjudgments should be brushed up. And to argue, as Jonathan Pankel does (Letters, July 1), that because Carr was no longer with us when I wrote my article, it is a "backhanded compliment" to him, betrays personal prejudice rather than an honest moral or academic standard. As to the article's timing: I wrote it when I was asked to do so.

My place was about the public issues with which Carr concerned himself and therefore it was perfectly legitimate, indeed necessary, to accreditize his *Realist* attitudes. It did not "purport to be" a general review of Carr's last book—it was a general review on Carr. This was indicated both on the cover ("The Twilight of E. H. Carr") and in the title of the article ("A history in the making"). Besides, I made the point very explicit by saying that "the publication of Carr's last book provides an occasion to look back at his *magnum opus* in the context of his other writings". Nove knows perfectly well that the TLS often publishes long essays of a general nature on the occasion of the publication of a particular book. His irony about my "review" is therefore quite misplaced and really rather silly.

Nove's other arguments in his editorial outburst are as wrong as his are cheap, and no amount of abuse ("that job", "posthumous degradation", "vituperation", etc) will render them convincing. He can hardly be taken for an *arbitrator elegantiarum* who can decide what is and is not an "objective" analysis of Carr's writings, nor can he dictate what does or does not constitute an "odd" place to say something that he himself accepts as true.

No, to accept Mr. Pankel, another admirer of Carr, as an arbiter of taste. I find his letter devoid of any arguments, his tone offensively patronizing, his assumption of lofty superiority quite unattractive, and his rhapsodizing about Carr-Bertio polemic jejune, to say the least.

Nove is wrong to think that Carr's critical remarks about Stalinism in the eighth volume of the *History* (1968) were made so late because they "belonged within the history gets nearer to the Stalin period". In his review of Nove's book *Stalinism and After* (TLS, January 23, 1976), Carr himself wrote that "it is just about fifty years since the sinister and imposing figure of Stalin began to dominate the Soviet scene" (my italics). His remark in the eighth volume of the *History* was made in the context of an analysis of the events of 1926 and there was no earthly reason (except for his political attitude at the time) why he could not have made it previously, say, in one of the earlier volumes which dealt with the period which also included 1926, and which were published in 1958 and 1959. I do not know whether it is real or false naivety on the part of Nove to believe that Carr's silence on the subject (not only in the *History* but elsewhere) until such a late date had nothing to do with the shift in his position after the impact of Khrushchev and Solzhenitsyn (this is what I said, and not that "the flow of trendy letters", an assertion Nove falsely attributes to me).

It is equally false to affirm that I use the technique of "guilt by association" because I referred to Carr's thanks to Rothstein and Deutsch. It can only be used to understand Carr's position in 1950 to know that he considered Rothstein's comments and criticisms of his manuscript to be "valuable". Rothstein then published his own book in which he denied the existence of forced labour in Stalin's Russia, defended the truth of the Moscow Trials, etc.; a complimentary remark about such an author is highly revealing of Carr's attitude at the time. Why did Nove not accuse me of using the technique of "guilt by association" with regard to a quotation in which Carr used Hitler as a moral authority? Incidentally, in the same review, Carr commended Nove for writing "without the all too common inclusion of complacent moralising, of the origins, character and consequences of Stalinism". Is the introduction of this quotation also an example of my "guilt by association" technique?

As for Deutsch, Nove cannot really be serious when he criticizes me for writing about Carr's close association with him. Where was the time when their mutual admiration resulted in all those reviews praising each other to the skies? There is no doubt that Carr was influenced by Deutsch, and his evolution must have been affected by this to some degree. Is reference to it, then, "guilt by association" or a legitimate diagnosis of Carr's and Deutsch's "shared approach to" (and not, as Nove misquotes me, "a common interpretation of") Soviet history? Far from being "preposterous", I made a "point" of pointing out by writing that Carr's views did not remain different in spite of their common faith in the Soviet Union and pro-Soviet attitude.

As to the "Thermidor" analogy, Nove makes a song and dance about Trotsky's contradictory statements on it, quoted by Knel-Paz in his book; and suggests that I am unaware of them. So does Tamara Deutsch (Letters, July 1). In respect of the relevant passages in her husband's biography of Trotsky, I can assure them that I read these books, as well as Trotsky's own writings, quite diligently. But Mrs Deutsch does not explain why the letters to Radek from the Trotsky Archive, quoted in my essay, was omitted by Isaac Deutsch in those fifty pages of his book which he devoted to the subject of Trotsky's conception of Thermidor. The question I posed was not that of interpretation of Trotsky's analogy, but of his use of it. Fifty (or a thousand) pages of exegetical cannot change the fact that Deutsch omitted reference to which clearly indicated "Trotsky's intellectually dishonest approach in his analytical manipulation of this analogy. 'Opinion may differ', says Nove, as to 'why Deutsch (and Knel-Paz) chose not to quote' the particular document I cited, 'but what has all this to do with Carr'?"

As Nove has clearly missed my point here, I will try to expand it in the Marxist schema, building socialism

to the editor

means building the classless society. Before the revolution, Russian Marxists discussed passionately whether it would be possible to make a "proletarian revolution" in "backward Russia" where the Marxist prerequisites for "building socialism" did not exist. After 1917, the question of "building socialism" in Soviet Russia became a particularly tough nut to crack for Marxist theoreticians because it was no longer just a problem of making a revolution, which could be explained away as an accidental deviation from Marxist historical *Gesetzmässigkeit*, but of an allegedly emerging classless social structure. After Stalin's victory, Trotsky invoked the analogy with Thermidor. But in the Marxist scheme, Thermidor was the consolidation of the class domination of the bourgeoisie in the French Revolution. How could a Marxist believe at one and the same time that the analogy is right and that a classless society is going to be achieved after the political removal of the Stalinist "bureaucratic clique"? For logically thinking people, this inconsistency is impossible to resolve in the Marxist scheme, in which Thermidor signifies the replacement of one class rule by another.

Hence Deutsch's and Carr's dilemma. One can either abandon in this scheme the belief in the classless ("socialist") future of Soviet Russia or abandon the "Thermidor" analogy. Deutsch refused to do either. Carr, as I pointed out, towards the end of his life, came close to rejecting both. But he praised Deutsch for his "memorable analysis of the dilemma of Trotsky and of the revolution" (which he refused to face). He also said that Trotsky, in his (Alma Ata) exile, asserted "without equivocation", consistently during the troubled years in Moscow. It is in this context that the significance of the letter of 1928 from Trotsky to Radek, which illustrates Trotsky's "instrumental" attitude to the "Thermidor" analogy, can be seen. As I pointed out, its disturbing logical implications can explain its omission from Deutsch's biography of Trotsky. Its implications for Carr's perspective on the "building of socialism" in Soviet Russia are equally devastating. It was only in his very last years that he seems to have undergone some disenchantment, however feeble and inconsistent, about the radiant Soviet future.

Nove quotes triumphantly a passage from *What Is History?* in which Carr admitted, in a most general way, to

having been inconsistent in his writings. This is supposed to destroy my remark that "he never admitted in *unambiguous terms* to having been wrong. He merely shifted his stance; an intellectual hubris prevented him from re-examining them explicitly." An abstract admission of inconsistency is not the same as a concrete (and unequivocal) admission of having been wrong on specific issues.

This is one example of Nove's polemical method. Another is his charge that my "style is highly reminiscent of high Stalinism". This comparison only shows that Nove has never properly understood Stalinism, high or low. It is rather ironical that he now waxes so indignant about my allegedly Stalinist style, while in the past, as Carr noticed, he avoided introducing "complectent moralising" about the real thing.

Rubin Blackburn (Letters, July 15) extols the "rational methods of the earlier Marxist and Bolshevik tradition" and puts his hopes in "future Soviet L'Ouvertures and Wilberforces" (reverting from the present KGB methods to the earlier *Cheka* methods?). He thinks that I am "out of my depth" about Trotsky's "Thermidor thesis" because in Marxist usage, a "workers' state" is a state that has a ruling class, namely the working class. Do Marxist dialecticians always have to resort to such verbal tricks? My point was that the Trotskyite polemic about the Soviet Thermidor implied the question of the new ruling class. Besides, did not Engels say that on taking power, the working class abolishes itself as a class? Anyway, can contemporary experience be at all understood through the interminable semantic hairsplitting of the Marxist-Leninist dialecticians?

Rubin Blackburn graciously concedes that "Gibbon's conception of freedom was by no means entirely invalid", but charges that his "selective moral and human concern . . . does not extend to the *inferiores*, slaves and peasants of antiquity". His criticism of Gibbon's attitude to the slaves and the Stalinist Gulag genocide is somehow lost. Concern about these victims was, coincidentally or not, also conspicuously missing in E. H. Carr's work.

LEOPOLD LABEDZ,
30 Western Road, London N2.

M. B. Meilakh

Sir,—Nn dnubt some readers will by now have read about the recent arrest and detention of the well-known Leningrad scholar, Mikhail Borisovich Meilakh (*Guardian*, July 19, 1983). Meilakh's fate remains unknown. The charges against him have not been made public, but judging by the fate of other Jewish Leningrad intellectuals during the past few years, he could face charges under the criminal code, and a long term of imprisonment. Meilakh is a pupil of the late Academician, Viktor M. Zhirmunsky. He has published a number of important literary studies both in the Soviet Union and in the West. These include: *The Language of the Great Troubadour Poets* (1975)—the first such work to appear there in over sixty years; more than thirty articles in a new *Encyclopaedia of World Myth* (1980-82); and various articles on the subject of Anna Akhmatova and her poetry, including one on the influence of Dante (1972).

Meilakh is the editor of two important collections of Russian Modernist poets, both virtually unknown in the West, Danil Khamis and Aleksandr Vvedensky. These editions are currently in progress in West Germany and the United States respectively. "They risk remaining incomplete unless Meilakh is allowed to resume his work and research as an independent literary authority. I urge readers to express their protests at the detention of Mr Meilakh to the Soviet authorities. Let us hope that this scholar of international repute will be allowed to continue to make his contribution in the twin fields of his expertise: European and Russian poetry.

ISIA TLUSTY,
St Antony's College, Oxford.

Irma Pearl

Sir,—Eric Korn (Reminders, April 8) says that Irma Pearl, author of *Our Yesterday: Australian Life since 1853 in photographs*, "must be a merry pseudonym", and proceeds to demonstrate his sense of meritment.

Irma Pearl (*née* Jentzki), who died in 1962, was an artist and writer, and wife of the well-known Australian author, Cyril Pearl. She is remembered for her beauty, taste and true wit.

T. M. FITZGERALD,
13 Furber Road, Centennial Park,
New South Wales.

Among this week's contributors

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| DANIEL ABSE's collections of poems include <i>Way Out in the Centre</i> , 1981. | ROBERT HALSANO's recent books include <i>The Rope of the Lock</i> and <i>its Illustrations 1714-1896</i> , 1980. | R. J. OVERY is a lecturer in History at King's College, London. |
| JANET ADAM-SMITH's books include <i>John Buchan and his World</i> , 1979. | JEREMY HARTP is formerly vice-chairman of the Monopolies Commission. | F. V. PARSONS is Reader in Modern History at the University of Glasgow. |
| LORD ANNAN was Provost of King's College, Cambridge, 1956-66. | MARC JORDAN is working on a study of Edmé Bouchardon. | SIOENE POLLARD's most recent book, <i>The Wasting of the British Economy</i> , was published last year. |
| ALAN BARNARD lectures in Social Anthropology and African Studies at the University of Edinburgh. | JONATHAN KEATES teaches English at the City of London School. | J. M. J. ROOSTER is Editor of the journal <i>Parliaments, Estates and Representation</i> . |
| SARAH BAKERDORF is the author of <i>Disraeli</i> , 1982. | J. P. KEYNON's <i>The History Men: The Historical Profession in England Since the Renaissance</i> was published earlier this year. | G. M. SCANLON is a lecturer in Modern Spanish Literature at King's College, London. |
| A. O. J. COCKBURN's books include <i>The Achievement of Walter Scott</i> , 1969, and <i>Truth to Life</i> , 1974. | ERIC KORN is an antiquarian bookseller in London. | FRANCIS SPALDINO's <i>Vanessa Bell</i> will be published later this month. |
| DONALD DAVIE's collections of poems include <i>Three For Water Music</i> , 1981. | STEVEN LUKES's books include <i>Individualism and Durkheim</i> , both 1973. | GRAHAM SWIFT's collection of stories, <i>Learning to Swim</i> , was published last year. |
| JOHNNY DAVIES is a lecturer in Italian at the University of Cambridge. | GEORGEY MARSHALL's books include <i>Constitutional Theory</i> , 1971. | BRIAN TATE is Professor of Spanish at the University of Nottingham. |
| DANIS DONOHUE holds the Henry James Chair of English and American Letters at New York University. His books include <i>Percolous Alphabets</i> , 1981. | GRAHAM D. MARTIN is a senior lecturer in French at the University of Edinburgh. | E. S. TURNER's most recent book, <i>Dear Old Blighy</i> , was published in 1980. He is currently completing an ABC of Nostalgia. |
| D. J. ENRIGHT is the editor of <i>The Oxford Book of Death</i> , which was published earlier this year. | JOHN HOPS MASON's most recent book is <i>The Irritable Diderot</i> , 1982. | BRIAN VICKERS is the editor of <i>Rhetoric Revisited</i> , 1982. |
| VICKI PRAYER's collection of poems, <i>Close Relatives</i> , was published in 1981. | PATRICK MAYNARD is an associate professor of Philosophy at the University of Western Ontario. | D. J. WEST is the author of <i>Delinquency, Its Roots, Careers and Prospects</i> , 1982. |
| PETER GREENHAM is Keeper of the Royal Academy Schools. | ROGER MISTMAN's <i>Government and Society in Louis XIV's France</i> was published in 1977. | BLAIR WORDEN is the author of <i>The Rump Parliament</i> , 1974, and editor of <i>Edmund Ludlow's A Voice from the Watch Tower</i> , 1978. |
| | ALEC NOVE's <i>Political Economy and Soviet Socialism</i> was published in 1979. | |

Estimating the future

Alec Nove

ABRAM BERGSON and HERBERT S. LEVINE (Editors)

The Soviet Economy: Toward the Year 2000
452pp. Allen and Unwin. £27.50.
0 04 335045 3

This valuable work is based upon conference papers, presented in October 1980 at a gathering of leading American specialists on the Soviet economy. Included in it is a fascinating summary of critical discussions of the various papers. Both editors and contributors showed themselves well aware of the many uncertainties which limit the possibilities of confident forecasting, the outcome of which may be significantly affected by different assumptions about military expenditures, oil output, the effects of economic reform (if any), of the reorganization of agriculture, of the growth or contraction of foreign trade, and so on. The value of a symposium such as this lies in the fact that distinguished specialists were able to discuss these and other variables, and that an effort was then made to incorporate the various alternative projections into an econometric model. This model, as its authors point out, helps us to "encompass in quantitative terms the indirect as well as the direct effects - the total system input - of the various assumptions under consideration. . . . They also rightly stress the limitations of the method, since "any projection reflects, in a great extent, the judgment and insight of the analysts".

The use of this model attracted criticism from Michael Manove and Judith Thornton, and there is a danger that the complexity of the mathematical procedures gives an "inappropriate scientific aura" to what are in fact intelligent guesses. Some of the relationships specified in the model are based on extrapolation, some incorporate expert views and assumptions, and some of the conclusions which emerge from the computer are, so to speak, corrected by hand when the results appear implausible. While one paper (that of Berliner) does discuss various reform alternatives, their possible effects do not figure in the projections of the model. The authors of the econometric "overview" (Bond and Levine) correctly and honestly point out that they assume that "each of the factors of production is homogeneous in nature" (eg, that imported machines are no more "productive" than Soviet machines), and that "obviously this is not a very good depiction of reality". Paradoxically, the effort to disaggregate makes the study less, not more, convincing. It may seem crude to project a rate of growth based on such aggregates as total inputs of labour and capital, but in fact it is a very useful procedure, even if the "residual" presents definitional problems.

It is quite another matter to make estimates for each of many industries and sectors, for then the specificities of each should be the subject of specialized research. In this volume the only industrial sector studied in detail is energy. (A good paper by Robert Campbell). The general conclusion is that growth will be modest because of the growth of the labour force and of factor productivity - seems sound enough. But some of the more detailed projections look decidedly odd. This why should agricultural output grow by as much as 4.53 per cent per annum in 1981-85 and then only by 1.89 per cent in 1991-95? It could just as well be vice versa. Why does the "baseline projection" envisage an increase in the growth-effectiveness of investment after 1980? The trend in the 1970s was in the contrary direction. Is the outcome derived from an assumed rate of growth of GNP, or is the latter derived from the former? Given the expectation that oil output will stagnate (and oil alone accounted for over half of hard-currency earnings in 1980), how can the Soviet Union expect to increase the value of its exports to the "developed West" from \$24.2 billion in 1980 to \$65.8 billion in

1990? This does not follow at all from the sober and sensible assessment of the foreign trade by Ed Hewett. Is the projected decline in the rate of growth of "machine-building and metal-working" consistent with the assumed growth both of military hardware procurements and the re-equipment of civilian industry needed to sustain the projected industrial growth rate? Why should grain production rise by 3.09 per cent per annum in 1981-85, but only by 1.81 per cent in 1986-90? Again, why not vice versa? These may be the consequences of the interrelationships assumed in the model, but I find it hard to believe that these figures would survive a sectoral analysis. One is reminded of a saying cited in the March 1983 issue of the *American Economic Review*: "there are two things you are better off not watching in the making: sausages and econometric estimates". Finally, there is one statistical or printing error: in Table 1.8 the grain "balance" for the year 2000 is quite out of balance, since utilization exceeds supply from all sources by more than 40 million tons.

On the basic and vital question of the overall growth rate, the projection through to 2000 seems on the high side. Growth of GNP at 3.15 per cent annum through to the year 2000 seems the more improbable because linked to an increase of 5.16 per cent in capital stock, which is well above present trends. Evidence from Soviet sources shows a tendency towards stagnation, which alarms the leadership. Bergson's valuable paper analyses the many obstacles to the diffusion of technical progress, and these obstacles remain formidable. Capital output rates are rising, labour productivity increases ever more slowly. True, the existence of waste and inefficiency on a large scale is itself evidence of the potential for improvement, and greater efficiency is being most earnestly sought. However, Andropov's drive against indiscipline and corruption will surely not be enough, unless there is a fundamental reform of the planning system. Joseph Berliner's paper on reform is therefore of vital importance and is of the high quality one expects from him. He envisages a "status quo" with minor modifications, "reactionary" (neo-Stalinist, stronger centralised discipline, autarky), "radical" (the Hungarian "market" model) and, finally, what he calls "liberal" or "neo-NEP", which preserves centralized state planning but complements it with small-scale private enterprise. It is his view that if the malfunctioning of the economy reaches intolerable levels, the regime is more likely to opt for the "liberal" than the "radical" reform model, since it would perceive it as less threatening to the interests of the party-state machine. Such a conclusion could be questioned, but the argument is most cogently and elegantly presented.

Other very good papers include Murray Feshbach's discussion of population and labour force with excellent supporting evidence, and Gertrude Schroeder's survey of consumption - an admirable mixture of well-written verbal analysis and comparative statistics. (Just one phrase could be questioned: why, in a list of illegal activities which add to supply, does she include "consumer goods stolen from the state"? Presumably they were intended to be consumed, if not by the thieves!) Leslie Dienes tells us much about regional problems, and Martin Weitzman analyses industrial growth in aggregate with his usual skill. Gale Johnson's account of agricultural organization and management seeks to identify sources of inefficiency, and concludes that it is not "socialized agriculture" as such that is the main cause; it is, rather, a short time horizon, unreliable supply of poor-quality inputs. Inadequate infrastructure, inadequate agricultural production prospects are discussed by Diamond, Bettis, and Renssion. Of particular value in their account of the fodder problem. Their alternative projections of domestic production, import requirements, and possible changes in feed conversion ratios are sound and realistic. One could wish for more attention to the vital problem of peasant incentives, their lack of commitment as well as inadequacies of mechanization, cause a massive annual

mobilization of workers, students, soldiers, to bring in the harvest. After much hesitation, the party leadership has now backed the creation of small autonomous work-teams within state and collective farms, which may be an effective remedy.

The one political scientist present, Seweryn Bialer, contributed a typically perceptive paper on "politics and priorities". While fully recognizing the strains which low growth imposes upon the system, Bialer concludes that "the odds are overwhelming against" the fundamental economic reform. This conclusion, however, rests on the assumption that the Soviet Union is "a basically stable state" and that there is no "systemic crisis". Then indeed fundamental reform would be unnecessary. The word "crisis" is capable of many interpretations. It would indeed be wrong to suggest that the Soviet Union is in any danger of collapse or disintegration, yet it is not inappropriate to speak of a crisis of system. The odds are against fundamental economic reform, but perhaps no longer "overwhelmingly" against.

Finally, it remains for me to repeat that this rich and controversial volume is worth the closest attention from anyone interested in the subject.

"Tractorstroi, USSR, 1930", reproduced from *For the World to See: The Life of Margaret Bourke-White by Jonathan Silverman* (224pp. Secker and Warburg, £25.00 436 46470 5). Bourke-White wrote the Soviet propaganda value to the Soviet authorities of her 5000-mile trip as the price to be paid for her 800 photographs of Russian life.

Sauter pour mieux reculer

David C. Wilson

RODERICK MACFARQUHAR

The Origins of the Cultural Revolution: Volume 2. The Great Leap Forward 1958-1960
470pp. Oxford University Press.
£22.50.
0 19 214996 2

"The great leap forward ended not with a bang but a whimper." So begins the conclusion to the second volume of Roderick MacFarquhar's planned trilogy dealing with the decade preceding the Cultural Revolution. What a bang it was while it lasted. The largest nation on earth was seized with a compulsive determination to turn a backward China into one of the front-runners of the industrialized world by sheer hard work and determination. In the newly established communes sensible shock battalions worked only until midnight; the real enthusiasts sometimes worked for four or five days virtually without stopping. Throughout the country backyard steel furnaces sprang up, new factories were built and both targets and reported achievements shot upwards at dizzying speed. Euphoris - and hyperbole - reached new heights. The Party official in charge of agriculture described his vision of the Communist utopia, now within grasp, as a land flowing with milk and honey. There would be abundant food for all, with delicacies and white fungus for those who wanted them. All would have electricity, running water and television. After work people would wear silk and satin, and the communes would breed so many foxes that all would have overcoats lined with fox fur.

The dream turned out to be a nightmare. In 1960 the population of China declined by some 4.5 per cent. Roderick MacFarquhar estimates that some 16 to 29 million people died during the great leap because of the leap. The figures both for claimed achievements at the time, and for losses admitted later, are numbing in their magnitude. Not only were the Chinese "carried away by the self-deceptive euphoria of their 'heavenly mandate' foreign commentators too wrote as though the millennium had arrived. (A footnote

says kindly: "They shall be nameless".) It is hardly surprising that the great leap is now seen as one of the traumatic periods of modern Chinese history. The wonder is that Party only cracked slightly and did not split asunder as it did in the next great trauma of the Cultural Revolution.

For such a dramatic development, the great leap comes across as strangely haphazard and unplanned. The ideas of using China's one great asset, mobilized manpower, to push forward economic development, and of avoiding the mistakes the Russians had made in their agricultural policies, were sound enough. But the omission of the rural targets, the collectivizing peasantry broken up to make cooking pots being broken up to make iron in backyard furnaces; even the communes themselves, all seems to have grown with the haphazard rush of an avalanche. Mao blamed a journalist for prompting the rush to communism by publishing his one-word comment on an embryo commune: "good". MacFarquhar, with more justice, shows that much of the blame for what happened must rest on Mao himself, with his visionary thinking, his belief in continuous revolution and, perhaps above all, his domination over colleagues who were disposed to be more cautious. One, the Minister of Defence, Peng Teh-huai, challenged Mao at the crucial 1959 Lushan Conference. He was quickly overwhelmed. Mao reacted sharply to this challenge to his authority, with what MacFarquhar sees as the first use since the Communist victory of arbitrary personal power: an unhappy precedent for the Cultural Revolution.

It was not just in China itself that the great leap broke the mould of political life. Sino-Soviet relations - over recovered. The breach which opened in 1960 has never healed. The Russians began to see the Chinese as reckless, not only in their abandonment of orthodox economic policies, but in a high-risk policy of confronting American power in the Taiwan Straits and fighting the Indians on the disputed McMahon line. The Soviet Union had other priorities. Khrushchev saw his attempts at "improving relations with the United States" and the hopes engendered by the 1959 Camp David meetings, as more important than backing Chinese policies, which he clearly found incomprehensible and dangerous.

Furthermore, just as Mao reacted against the challenge inherent in Peng's criticism of the great leap, so the Russians were outraged by following their right to be the sole fountainhead of orthodox policy, the Communist movement. As a mark of displeasure, and to bring the Chinese to heel, some 1,300 Soviet advisers were suddenly withdrawn from China. The Chinese were not brought to heel. The political map of the world has been different ever since.

All these developments provide part of the backdrop to the Cultural Revolution, which MacFarquhar is painting with skill, careful research, and cool analysis. He is helped in this particular volume by a mass of new material made available in the past few years by a Chinese leadership whose policies are the deliberate antithesis of those of the great leap forward. With this, and the information which the Red Guards used to attack the old cadres during the Cultural Revolution, it is now possible to study the period more thoroughly than ever before, both for the broad issues and for such fascinating details as Deng Hsiao-ping missing most of the crucial Lushan Conference because he broke his leg, or the playing ping-pong. MacFarquhar, with his long experience of studying Chinese affairs, makes excellent use of all these sources to provide a judicious and detailed account of three traumatic years.

The aims, claims and disasters were all on a gigantic scale. So was the growing clash between the two great powers of the Communist world. Behind the man-made dramas was the continuing drama of China's climate and geography. The struggles of political leaders pale into insignificance beside the fact that in 1960, China was parched by drought, and then buffeted by typhoons. In March and June 1960, the drought was so bad that it was possible to walk across the lower reaches of the Yellow River. Nature and man combined to make the disaster complete, and retreated. China ended and planners regained control of the economy. Mao's growing disquiet was the state of affairs which followed in the last book of the MacFarquhar trilogy. Our understanding of the period of rebot Chinese history will be richer for it.



JAMES R. JACOB

Henry Stubbe: Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment
220pp. Cambridge University Press.
£19.50.
0 521 24876 0

Henry Stubbe (1632-76) has a place in the history of politics, of medicine, and of religion. His political propaganda helped the Puritan radicals in 1659 and the Stuart monarchy in 1672-73. As a doctor, he took an enterprising interest in the new science and engaged in stormy controversy with the early Royal Society. In *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, a breezy work which remained unpublished until 1911, he cut through the inhibitions of theological debate to produce a critique of Christian doctrine, and a challenge to providentialist explanation, which have earned him comparisons with Gibbon. Stubbe was an exceptionally clever man, with a forbidding range of learning, an incisive turn of phrase and a hunger for attention. Yet his contemporary impact was limited. To read the vivid and well-informed sketch of him by Anthony Wood, who called the young Stubbe "the most noted person of his age that these late times have produced", is to wonder how, even in a short life, so much promise came to so little.

James R. Jacob thinks this an unreal difficulty. Stubbe's achievements, he maintains, have been seriously underestimated. The divisions of academic labour, which have distributed Stubbe's pre-Restoration writings to historians of political thought and his publications after 1660 to historians of science, have obscured a continuous thread of consistency in his career. When that thread has been glimpsed, we can learn to appreciate Stubbe as "one of the most interesting and original thinkers of his age", who "helps to revise our understanding of the origins of the Enlightenment".

We are told by the opening words of this book is a piece of detective work. The detective is needed to uncover Stubbe's intellectual consistency. That consistency is certainly likely to elude a casual reader of Stubbe's work and of the sparse materials for his life. On an unsuspecting perusal, indeed, the only visible consistency might seem to lie in Stubbe's willingness to serve his

various patrons. He had a living to earn, and more than one career to pursue. In the 1650s, an ambitious but impecunious young Oxford don, he enjoyed the favour of three important men: Sir Henry Vane, Thomas Hobbes, and Cromwell's Vice-Chancellor John Owen. In 1659 he devoted his nimble pen to Vane's radical cause, a commitment which impelled him to bite the feeding hand of Owen, just as he was to bite the hand of James Harrington a few months later.

After the Restoration Stubbe's Vanist past was a heavy liability, sure to be exploited by his opponents in controversy. Yet he worked his way back, found new patrons at Court, and in 1672 was hired by the government to write in favour of the Dutch war and the Declaration of Indulgence. Next year, however, English politics were transformed by the match between James, Duke of York, and Mary of Modena, and by the consequent prospect of a Catholic dynasty. It is a fair guess that Stubbe had been introduced to the Court by "Whigs" who now withdrew from it, for in October 1673 he was briefly imprisoned after writing against the royal marriage. In the remaining three years of his life he did not break the political surface again.

Jacob proposes a markedly different account of Stubbe's career. The authentic Stubbe, he believes, is the political radical of 1659, the scourge of kings, nobles, clergymen and universities. After the Restoration his radicalism, although possibly modified, remained intact. To perceive it, we must engage in detective work. We have to remember the censorship which prevailed in the "hostile and repressive" environment of the Restoration, when radicals were driven "underground". Stubbe, "no longer free to espouse his radical political and religious views", resorted to "rhetorical duplicity". His works, "marked by subterfuge and replete with double meanings", must be "read between the lines": "a careful reader or decoding strips away the masks and lays bare the double meaning." Once we know how to read Stubbe "correctly", we often find that what he says is different from, even the opposite of, what he means. The problematical tensions of Stubbe's life disappear. He was radical in politics, science, in religion. Radical political

change would introduce "a radical civil religion", which "was meant to tenor down a clerically dominated society and clerically dominated learning to replace them with something more secular and pagan."

I fear that Jacob has become mesmerized by a thesis which has no evidence to support it, which is countered by such evidence as there is, and which proves to rest on a hapless series of textual and contextual misunderstandings. His reading of Stubbe's tracts is largely concentrated on a handful of brief passages, taken out of context and out of sequence. The consequences of this approach become sadly evident once we reach the Restoration and confront the question of double meanings. Jacob's first close textual engagement is with Stubbe's *Essay in Defence of the Good Old Cause* (1659), his discussion of which is a catalogue of worrying misinterpretations. In the passage to which Jacob gives most attention, Stubbe presents a straightforward argument to show that Old Testament injunctions against idolatry and blasphemy cannot be legitimately used to sanction religious intolerance in seventeenth-century England. Jacob has contrived to read the passage as a statement that the Hebrew policy had produced "the first universal, natural religion that might serve as the remote and primitive archetype for a civic, natural religion in England."

Later we meet the claim, based on "closer reading" of Stubbe's pamphlets against the Royal Society in 1669-71, that he inserted "subversive meanings" into them. Stubbe, we learn, surreptitiously alluded to doctrines which were "officially proscribed": "What Stubbe in fact does is to rehearse sixteenth-century resistance theory deriving from Calvin and elaborated by his, chiefly Huguenot, interpreters." Why this political heresy should have been discernible by radicals, yet have escaped detection by the repressive censors of a Court which was to employ him soon afterwards, is not explained. The truth is that the heresy is not there. Stubbe drew a clear distinction, to which Jacob is oblivious but which was commonplace in discussion of political obligation, between active resistance and "an obedience merely passive". The former he disowned; the latter, which as worded by Stubbe was respectable, he upheld.

It is true that Stubbe's pamphlets in the late 1660s and early 1670s do not always say what high-flying divines have not liked them to say. His political outlook is fundamentally secular, and his Restoration tracts, most notably his *Further Justification of the Dutch War* in 1673, are often ironic at the Church's expense. In the period surrounding the Declaration of Indulgence, however, that irony would have had a broad and reputable political appeal. Ironic and ambivalent writing in Restoration political literature is a pregnant subject in both literary and political history: well worth exploring from an angle less obvious than Jacob's. It would be a pity to reduce the issue to one of censorship, an obstacle which seems to have worried most seventeenth-century writers less than it exercises some of their twentieth-century historians.

Stubbe's works are richer, and the influences upon them broader, than one could infer from Jacob's selective treatment of them. Stubbe's own political position, in so far as it can be disentangled from his opportunism, suggests an interesting if ill-balanced assortment of ideas and enthusiasms: anticlericalism; a fascination with "reason of state" and with the relationship between religion and national unity; an admiration for the frugal virtues which had flourished in ancient republics; a conception of politics as the art of the possible. These preoccupations, we can readily agree, did not always fit easily into the political causes to which Stubbe's pamphlets summoned them. He was not the only seventeenth-century intellectual to confront a tension between his own beliefs and those of

Jacob's suggestion that the same pamphlets indicate "Stubbe's acceptance of parliamentary sovereignty", and his claim that Stubbe "saw parliament" as "the defender of popular liberties against the Society", betray a similar unfamiliarity with the language of seventeenth-century political discussion, and appear to derive from an unfounded assumption that in 1669-71 readers would have spotted sedition in any statement about monarchy which did not advertise unquestioning enthusiasm for an unlimited and divinely appointed prerogative. Ill at ease among seventeenth-century politics, Jacob has trouble with their chronology. The Commonwealth's engagement of loyalty was not introduced in 1651; it is misleading to say that Stubbe's republican tracts were published in "late 1659"; the composition of a pamphlet written by Stubbe in 1669 is allocated to 1670 on one page and to 1671 on the next. Stubbe's works are neither listed nor indexed, an omission which compounds the difficulties created by Jacob's over-abbreviated references.

Jacob recognizes that hard evidence of Stubbe's movements and allegiances after 1660 is hard to come by. So it would seem worth listening to two clear indications which do survive from the 1660s. One, which Jacob does not mention, belongs to 1665, when Stubbe, in a gesture hardly suggestive of subterranean radical credentials, publicly thanks Sir Charles Lyttelton for fixing me in the family of "the royalist courtier Viscount Mordaunt". The other, which Jacob does mention but does not explain, is the apology prefixed by Stubbe to *The Indian Nectar*, his pamphlet of 1662 on the medical value of chocolate. Having acquired a Court post, he renounces his radical past and declares that "I have no longer a regard or concern for Sir Henry Vane, or Gen. Ludlow, than is consistent with my sworn allegiance" to the restored monarchy. The dedicatory epistle of that pamphlet is dated April 1662, the month when Vane, on whose fate Puritan eyes were anxiously turned, was moved to the Tower in preparation for his trial and execution. (Jacob rightly remarks that Vane "was executed after 1660".) It is simply inconceivable that a republican reader of Stubbe's statement would have interpreted it as a testament to enduring but strategically concealed radicalism, or would have turned to Stubbe's subsequent writings for heartening signs of interlinear sedition.

It is true that Stubbe's pamphlets in the late 1660s and early 1670s do not always say what high-flying divines have not liked them to say. His political outlook is fundamentally secular, and his Restoration tracts, most notably his *Further Justification of the Dutch War* in 1673, are often ironic at the Church's expense. In the period surrounding the Declaration of Indulgence, however, that irony would have had a broad and reputable political appeal. Ironic and ambivalent writing in Restoration political literature is a pregnant subject in both literary and political history: well worth exploring from an angle less obvious than Jacob's. It would be a pity to reduce the issue to one of censorship, an obstacle which seems to have worried most seventeenth-century writers less than it exercises some of their twentieth-century historians.

Stubbe's works are richer, and the influences upon them broader, than one could infer from Jacob's selective treatment of them. Stubbe's own political position, in so far as it can be disentangled from his opportunism, suggests an interesting if ill-balanced assortment of ideas and enthusiasms: anticlericalism; a fascination with "reason of state" and with the relationship between religion and national unity; an admiration for the frugal virtues which had flourished in ancient republics; a conception of politics as the art of the possible. These preoccupations, we can readily agree, did not always fit easily into the political causes to which Stubbe's pamphlets summoned them. He was not the only seventeenth-century intellectual to confront a tension between his own beliefs and those of

his employers, although others met the challenge with more dignity. Unmistakably the contemporary of Marvell, Marchmont Nedham and John Hall of Durham, Stubbe was a child of political chaos. He had to make his way in a world whose violent changes were not of his making.

And who knew, after 1660, that the tide would not turn again? Jacob, searching for evidence that contemporaries were alive to Stubbe's double meanings, lights upon some remarks by Stubbe's Royal Society opponent Joseph Glanville. Glanville's accusations, plainly intended to embarrass Stubbe by their public reference to his youthful indiscretions, are not worth much, but in any case Glanville's point, in the passage where he is reported to have detected "subversive undertones" in a statement which seemed "innocent enough on its surface", is not that Stubbe has furtively egged on the radicals; it is that he has couched royalist sentiments in language which would enable him to explain them away "should his old patrons return to their insolent reign".

It would be a pity if Jacob's thesis were to discredit his subject. He gives welcome publicity to Stubbe's treatise on Mahometanism, even if his account of it does scant justice to Stubbe's zealous intelligence. It is possible that a historian willing to explore the intellectual background to earlyicism, and not content to observe resemblances between Stubbe's work and the writings of Blount and Toland, would establish for the treatise the importance in the history of ideas which Jacob claims for it. And Jacob is surely right to dwell on Stubbe's departure from providentialist history, although it then becomes impossible to reconcile Jacob's claim that the 1659 Stubbe is the true Stubbe with the stark providentialism of his 1659 pamphlet *Malice Rebuked*. The claim is also hard to reconcile with a private letter to Hobbes in 1656 in which he explained the function of the universities he was publicly to attack three years later.

We are offered bold but strangely impressive assertions about the significance of Stubbe's scientific arguments, which are held to have been more "enlightened" than some scholars have allowed. Jacob appears to see in them (unless I have read too much between the lines) a regrettably extinguished alternative to the enlightenment, and to a "liberal" set of scientific beliefs, which were imposed by the Royal Society and by "Latitudinarian" theologians in order to dish the radicals. So grand a theme merits a more rigorous and better documented argument.

The English Chartered trading companies and the sea by G. V. Scammell (48pp. The Trustees of the National Maritime Museum, £2.50. 0 90555 70 8) is a concise illustrated history in twelve sections, among which are "Companies: Origins, Nature and Functions", "Commodities and Cargoes" and "Whaling".

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Radicalism between the lines

Blair Worden

JAMES R. JACOB

Henry Stubbe: Radical Protestantism and the Early Enlightenment
220pp. Cambridge University Press.
£19.50.
0 521 24876 0

Henry Stubbe (1632-76) has a place in the history of politics, of medicine, and of religion. His political propaganda helped the Puritan radicals in 1659 and the Stuart monarchy in 1672-73. As a doctor, he took an enterprising interest in the new science and engaged in stormy controversy with the early Royal Society. In *An Account of the Rise and Progress of Mahometanism*, a breezy work which remained unpublished until 1911, he cut through the inhibitions of theological debate to produce a critique of Christian doctrine, and a challenge to providentialist explanation, which have earned him comparisons with Gibbon. Stubbe was an exceptionally clever man, with a forbidding range of learning, an incisive turn of phrase and a hunger for attention. Yet his contemporary impact was limited. To read the vivid and well-informed sketch of him by Anthony Wood, who called the young Stubbe "the most noted person of his age that these late times have produced", is to wonder how, even in a short life, so much promise came to so little.

James R. Jacob thinks this an unreal difficulty. Stubbe's achievements, he maintains, have been seriously underestimated. The divisions of academic labour, which have distributed Stubbe's pre-Restoration writings to historians of political thought and his publications after 1660 to historians of science, have obscured a continuous thread of consistency in his career. When that thread has been glimpsed, we can learn to appreciate Stubbe as "one of the most interesting and original thinkers of his age", who "helps to revise our understanding of the origins of the Enlightenment".

We are told by the opening words of this book is a piece of detective work. The detective is needed to uncover Stubbe's intellectual consistency. That consistency is certainly likely to elude a casual reader of Stubbe's work and of the sparse materials for his life. On an unsuspecting perusal, indeed, the only visible consistency might seem to lie in Stubbe's willingness to serve his

An Augustan before his time

John Carswell

RICHARD FABER

The Brave Courtier: Sir William Temple
187pp. Faber, £15.
0 571 11982 8

Sir William Temple has an important place in the diplomacy of the later seventeenth century and in the literary style of the eighteenth; and he was the style of one of the cleverest and most charming series of love letters in the English language, for which he is remembered, even today. It is surprising he has not attracted more attention from scholars. The last biography was published more than forty years ago and there is no complete modern edition of his once celebrated works.

Sir Richard Faber disclaims scholarship and scholarly impediments, and makes no recourse to his quotations or authorities. His contribution is four essays, of which the first is a general survey of Temple's career. The others are: a diplomatist, and a man of letters; a diplomatist, and a man of letters; a diplomatist, and a man of letters. Sir Richard has read widely and has some interesting things to say, but his procedure here follows involves him in a number of errors. He is, in fact, a man of letters, and rather muffled the developments of Temple as a man of letters. He is, in fact, a man of letters, and rather muffled the developments of Temple as a man of letters. He is, in fact, a man of letters, and rather muffled the developments of Temple as a man of letters.

father, but in fact both refer to Temple himself.

Temple was handsome, well-connected, and fairly comfortably off. He wrote with unusual clearness and originality of style, read the right books, and had high principles and ideals of public service in a period that was sadly short of both. He was, in fact, a highly civilized man and believed in reason and consensus. Kings, he considered, should make decisions after listening to "the opinions of carefully chosen, well-informed, and loyal advisers such as himself, and take into account what their subjects would and would not stand. So he shied away from the great political controversies of his time about arbitrary power and parliamentary or popular institutions; indeed he rather looked down on those who espoused and spent time on them. The Exclusion Controversy and the Revolution of 1688 left him neutral. His religious position was rational, tolerant, and hard to define.

His distinction is to stand as a candle in the naughty Restoration world. But as a diplomatist he was taken for a ride by Charles II, which induced him to abandon the profession, and shortly before his death he was made to look at the savage and the Triple Alliance (the diplomatic treaty between the Netherlands, the Netherlands, and the Netherlands). He was a serious counsellor to the Swedes as the greatest European power, France, Charles, however, saw it as a tactical means of bringing pressure to bear on France, from whom he duly proceeded, without consulting Temple, to extract the best terms he could for an arrangement

which suited his underlying policy and inclinations. Temple had a mournful satisfaction, especially after 1688, of having been right in his judgment of British interests, and has been vindicated by posterity for it, but not for his judgment of the King he served.

The scholarly episode of the supposed *Psalterius Letters*, though trivial in itself, goes deeper. In his defence of the classics against the "moderns" Temple gave unstinting praise to the wisdom and insight of a work which Bentley proceeded to prove was spurious. It was a betrayal of more than weak scholarship. Temple despised scholarship and science at a time of rapid, effortless advance in both. He lived in the age of Locke and Newton but lumped their work together with alchemy and pedantry. Sir Richard convincingly opines that Temple was a man not of his own time, but of the time before and the time after.

That following Augustan age was marked by his greatest achievement - the development of a prose style which, refined by Swift, Addison and Steele, dominated three generations of literature. Such a triumph amply compensates for Macaulay's depreciation and Disraeli's sneer about "the diplomatical view of his Triple Alliance of Britain, the Netherlands, and the Netherlands". He was a serious counsellor to the Swedes as the greatest European power, France, Charles, however, saw it as a tactical means of bringing pressure to bear on France, from whom he duly proceeded, without consulting Temple, to extract the best terms he could for an arrangement

Learning to cope

Janet Adam Smith

-196pp. Manchester: Carcanet. £8.95.
0856354600

Pubs, poets, deadlines took their
serious toll; and in 1958 George
Fraser went off to the quieter waters of
the English Department at Leicester,
eventually becoming Reader in Poetry.
He died in 1980, shortly after his

was appointed Town Clerk Depute of Aberdeen, the city which was to engage George's loyalty, perhaps most strongly after he had left it. Glasgow he considered in retrospect, was "a strange, dark, shapeless dream: a great, and awfully bewildering human lives". Aberdeen, with its brisk, bold air and clearly defined boundaries provided him with "more outward strictness and more inner security". Even today, the city's strong sense of identity and well-defined shape has allowed it to absorb North Sea oil without losing its character.

The Frasers' Aberdeen home was on the fringe of the city, with a large neglected garden where George could moon about and read Dickens in old editions from the public library; the school was the Grammar, which Byron had briefly attended, where "though hard-working and docile, I was always

This sounds like a hard-luck story of the sensitive bookish boy who didn't flourish. But the lack of confidence in his social self was balanced by his confidence and determination of his literary self. "I felt the world was there to be coped with, and language was my means of coping." So he worked away at being a writer. He read strenuously, he wrote drawls of poems, he began to have acceptances from London magazines - while all the time in talk at home, he would pass his poetry off as an eccentric hobby:

So the stiff stanzas and the prosy lines
Accumulated on my dusty shelf,
A family joke, like any secret vice . . .

At St Andrews he had met a like-minded boy who was as mad about writing as himself: Nicholas Moore. Communication was tricky, because both were shy, and each had difficulty with the other's accent; but after they separated, they kept up a vigorous correspondence. Fraser the writer was bolder than Fraser of the ballroom

a small, burly man, with a round comedian's face, and a light voice that fluted away in unexpected, malicious phrases; monopolising every conversation, without appearing to do so, he could make an evening magically entertaining.

The extraordinary John Gawsorth Jacobite, Sinn Féiner, Indian Nationalist, according to the mood of the moment — appears as a very untidy RAF sergeant, his tunic stained and short of buttons, but wearing in his lapel the badge of the Chevalier of the Court of the Bev of Tunis.

It was to London George Fraser came back at the end of the war, for his father had died, and the rest of the family had moved south; and there, in his demob suit of pinstripe grey, he felt like Balzac's young man, wanting "to be loved and famous". In no time Tambimuttu, who had published Fraser's first book of poems while he was abroad, had him back in the literary swim; Willaro Empson had opened his literary wings; Kathleen Raine was Chelsea neighbour and friend.

Dylan Thomas had been reading earlier, in that voice like the thundering of a gong above a sea of treacle; the vowels bursting from the small round mouth like viscous bubbles. Then Mr Eliot read in his dry yet rich voice, with its extraordinary exact variations of pacing, almost like those of a motor changing gear. Finally, Empson read with his head on one side, cocking it up a little with an alert and pleased look, while the same, every line of his body, seemed to follow the lines of so to some pungent equivocation; and with his legs astride, and awaying to rest his weight, now on this foot, now on that, to mark the broad movement of the rhythm.

The autobiography ends in 1949, with George Fraser half-realizing his Balzacian wish: loved, by the wife who has helped to prepare this volume, and if not famous, a promising man of letters. And this review ends with lines from a poem, written in the Middle East, which bring back clearly to me the city where we both grew up: "Home Town Elegy - for Aberdeen in Spring".

Glitter of mica at the windy corners,
 Tor in the nostrils, under blue lamps
 Like bubbles of glass the blue buds of e
 'Night-shining shopfronts, or the sleek sun
 The broad abundant dying sprawl of the
 Dec:

For these and for their like my thoughts are
That yet shall stand, though I come home
Gas-works, white ballroom, and the red
Or beyond the municipal golf-course, the
And the country lying quiet and full of
This is the shape of a land that outlives
And is not to be taken with rhetoric of

High thoughts and low

GIVEN WATKINS
Portrait of a Friend.
20pp. Llandysul: Gomer Press
1950.
015083 847 6

085088 847 6

Galdós's Novel of the Historical Imagination.
196pp. Francis Cairns, The University, P.G. Box 147, Liverpool. L69 3BX. £12.50.
0 905205 14 6

There is now a great deal more criticism of Galdós in English than there are English translations of his work. Many of the novels of Spain's greatest novelist since Cervantes remain untranslated; most of those which have been translated are unavailable. The parheliastrous tradition accordingly here to Hispanists and the cowardice of the publishing industry are of course primarily responsible for this state of affairs. But also to be blamed are the priorities of the academic profession according to which the most trivial work of interpretation counts more in the struggle for promotion and tenure than the most penetrating translation of a socially worthwhile, perhaps, but undeniable evidence of mediocrity. The translator can expect a patronizing commendation at best, or at worst become victim of the "I could have done much better if I'd bothered to game."

Peter Bly's book is not at all trivial. Galdós's greatest novels (those of the 1880s, the main object of Dr Bly's study) explore and meditate upon an interrelationship between public and private life, and Bly focuses thoroughly and expert attention upon the relationship in its historical dimension. Paced by the problem of what is in these books, for they are not exact historical novels — though Galdós wrote over forty of those — Bly opens (the rather common sense) "new windows of cultural imagination" — see you, the English Blyot — work by Thomas Deegan. If as it term that remains rather vague, one wonders if all novels are

in the broad sense exercises of historical imagination. Furthermore, given that Gaddis's interest in history formed part of an intensely moral concern with the problem of how to achieve national regeneration without impairing the values of privacy and how to construct a modern morality that should do justice to energies and potential heroisms as individual citizens (it is not clear if these could not at well be called *the* of the political imagination) might even be dated novels of sociological imagination, for no one at the least, the pleasure afforded

anyone reading Galdós's substantial opus in chronological order is to watch his evolution from self-appointed spokesman for Spain's frail middle class to its educator and critic. The man who in 1868 believed that his country's future health depended on the existence of a vigorous middle class capable of controlling the parasitic extravagance of the aristocracy at the top and the irrational excesses of the urban mob at the bottom, in 1917 welcomed the Russian revolution.

It is churlish, however, to criticize the imprecise theoretical framework of this study, since Bly has only risked such criticism by his rejection of the tired old "history in the works of..." formula and the kind of catalogue scholarship that goes with it. Certainly, his formula is adequate to permit a skilful study of the novels of the 1880s.

A Galician

G. M. Scanlon

MAURICE HEMINGWAY
Emilia Pardo Bazán: The Making of
the Novelist

190pp. Cambridge University Press.
£19.50.
0 521 24466 8

The Spanish nineteenth-century novel now has not travelled well. Even the outstanding novelist of the period, Galdós, is little known outside Spain. Other writers of merit have fared less well. This book is to be welcomed therefore, for bringing one of Spain's major novelists to the attention of a wider public.

Emilia Pardo Bazán was a woman of boundless energy and considerable talents. A militant feminist; journalist; literary critic, short-story writer; and novelist, she had a taste for polemics which kept her at the forefront of intellectual life in nineteenth-century Spain. She first gained notoriety for a series of articles published in the early 1880s in which she expressed a qualified approval of Naturalism, a movement dismissed by many of her contemporaries as sordid and immoral. Even Zola was somewhat bewildered to learn that he had a woman disciple in Spain who was a staunch Catholic. Maurice Henneberg believes that Zola's influence on Pardo Bazán's fiction has been overemphasized at the expense of that of the Goncourt brothers. More importantly, he argues that the critics' concentration on

The central chapters of this monograph convincingly demonstrate how subtly Oaldós exploited his readers' knowledge of recent history to enrich his stories of individuals' lives and, conversely, how these could and sometimes should be seen to operate at the level of historical allegory. Bly is at his best when teasing out the implications of glancing historical allusions, to show how they make a pattern which reflects or reinforces that of the fictional biographies.

Bly has successfully overcome the first difficulty of converting a PhD thesis into a book: his book is very readable. There are, indeed, occasions when the attempt to enliven produces a distinctly strained effect, with such chapter headings as "In History's Antechamber" and "Hesitant Emergence of a Redemptive Ahistoricism."

Goncourt

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- Naturalistic novels of the early 1880s has been largely responsible for the common view of her as a significant but dated writer.

His own study aims to rectify the judgments by focusing on the novels of the late 1880s and early 1890s which, in his opinion, show her work at its best. For him, *Los pazos de Ulloa* (1886). Naturalistic study of the decline of the aristocracy in rural Galicia and widely regarded as her finest work, marks the point at which she began to regard as the main function of the novel as the dramatization of human psychology rather than the representation of the external world. Following the latest developments in both literature and science, she found inspiration in the new theories of evolution and heredity. Her work became available in French translation. In the French novelist Pierre Bourger and in new theories of experimental psychology.

To reverse the somewhat common, depending on critical methodology, Pardo Bazan's distinction as a novelist, principally, in her descriptions of power, rather than in her handling of psychology and characterization, no mean task. Hemingway's analysis and often humbling, rarely, persuasively demonstrate that, occasionally, she was indeed capable of deftly exploring the complexity of human motivation and of achieving open-endedness which is generous to the taste of the modern reader, the self-confident, certain of the Naturalist novel. This is, therefore, a positive contribution to the understanding of her work for, as

But his work still bears traces of the remorselessly one-tracked thinking characteristic of the doctoral thesis. One would have liked to be reminded from time to time that Galdós was a very funny as well as a very serious writer, that he was fascinated by the working of families, not just by isolated individuals on the one hand and society at large on the other. Above all, he was one of the great innovators of psychological realism; there is a great deal in common between his accounts of personality and those of Freud, as there was a great deal in common between Madrid and Vienna. Even his portrayal of Ildardo Rubeo in *La Desheredada*, a character full of his own symbolism, Galdós sacrifices to one's sense of the importance of personality on the altar of allegorical significance.

the quality of some of these novels does not always quite match Hemingway's enthusiasm for them, he undoubtedly substantiates his claim that they have been unjustly neglected. Nevertheless, it must be admitted that although Pardo Bazán's work usually raises interesting questions, she was no uneven novelist. Hemingway was not, and analyses her flaws but his discussion with its emphasis on objective criticism, fails at times to give sufficient weight to important factors which certainly affected her work. The most obvious of these is her position as a woman struggling to make a place for herself in a male dominated literary establishment. If this fact helps to explain some of her weaknesses, it also tends to pedantry for example, and her contradictions with the use of the first person narrator—*she* is never permitted to discuss her achievement or her failure. It is certainly not necessary to deem her as Hemingway tends to do, to make a convincing case for her significance as a writer.

A recent publication from the Modern Language Association of America is *Spanish and Spanish-American Literature: An Annotated Guide to Selected Bibliographies* by Hensley C. Woodbridge (Japp, New York, W. W. Norton, 1974, \$10.50). The section devoted to Spanish literature is arranged chronologically followed by bibliographies of poetry, plays, fiction, and miscellaneous genres; that on Spanish-American literature is arranged by country. The volume also includes an author index.

085088 847 6

During the war, when both Vernon Watkins and Dylan Thomas happened to be visiting London, they were talking at the same time, and an air-raid warning sounded. Soon after, a flying-bomb could be heard overhead — and worse, suddenly its engine cut out. After the much of the explosion, some little distance away, the taxi moved on and Dylan-Thomas gasped, "I thought we were going to be killed. All I could think of was the disgrace of my body being found with a copy of *Revelations* — the pin-up page." Vernon Watkins, that most serious of men — who has been described by C. S. Lewis as "one of the 'bristling' Thomas, whose integrity" — "bristling" — seemed he replied ponderously, "I could have been all right because I carry Kierkegaard in my pocket."

...in his brilliant literary friendship
between these two Swensens. Both
poets was how much Vernon Watkins
was obsessed by his more formal
obsession. His obsession was rooted in
the admiration of Thomas's poetry and in
his focus on man himself. For his part
Thomas became increasingly careless of
his friend's susceptibilities, but
the love was forgiven. Pathetic
in that volume which
Watkins kept in his pocket was
a declaration that
"I love means to love the one
whom love became unhappy."
Case: Watkins came to identify
himself with the

eventually that it was simply a case of Dr Jekyll forgiving Mr Hyde.

After Thomas died *Time* magazine crudely described the poet as "a dandy liar, a moocher, a thief, a two-faced, double-breasted, puffy Prapnu who regularly assailed the wives of his best friends, an icy little hedonist who indifferently lived it up while his children went hungry . . ." Watkins would not accept that there was a grain of truth in this caricature. He averred that his friend was "Paul, a wonder, self-critical, a great companion, generous . . ." Gwendolyn Watkins wrote with exaggeration that "to the end of his own life, the thought of Dylan was never out of Vernon's mind or heart."

Ma Watkins is reticent, perhaps to resent, about her own relationship with Dylan Thomas. She is most riveting when she speaks not from hearsay but from personal experience (Watkins's friendship with Dylan was almost a decade old before he met his wife-to-be.) One must recall the extent of Thomas's reputation when she touches on his drinking. "My student friend from Oxford asked me unbelievably if I was really going to marry a man who knew Dylan Thomas, and I was proud to answer that Dylan Thomas was, in fact, to be the best man at my wedding." Since he did not turn up as the best man lifted them, she says, "and his subsequent death seemed to be obvious to me, it was a small wonder that I was separated from the now Mr. Watkins from Thomas at their first meeting."

Dylan arrived in the Café Royal hotel and very evidently wishing he hadn't arranged the meeting at all. To do him justice, he did his best to be pleasant, but he was not used to concealing his emotions. He told funny stories, he showed off, he blustered about his wife and children, he stopped passing friends and had confidential chats with

them, he dropped names, drinks and cigarette ash. After an hour of this I could no longer hide from myself that what I felt at my first meeting with the poet of *Holy Spring* and *Poem in October* was inescapable boredom. I was bored with his behaviour and with what he was saying: I wanted out.

Gwen Watkins's relationship with Thomas hardly prospered in the years to come.

Thomas himself felt affectionate towards Watkins — "one of Nature's bachelors" his wife calls him — but as Dylan became older he grew less and less patient with his high-minded and very literary friend, even became bored with his company. It was not his Dylan's deteriorating character that repudied the debts or to carry out the duties of a friend. Moreover, even after over a decade of friendship, Thomas's poems these were not in any way central to his life as his own were to Vernon. Why should that have been?

Mrs Watkins, though, in her interesting, if limited, study is interested in demonstrating the affinity between the two poets. Can one see them as two sides of the same coin? Both were born and brought up in Swansea, both were romantic, "religious" poets dedicated to their craft, both were poets about poets, and both died in the United States. Indeed, according to Gwen Watkins, both their deaths were self-willed. Veron Watkins had a serious coronary yet continued to play squash, to clamber the steep cliffsides of Fennard on the Gower Coast, and to finally suffer a mortal stroke while he playfully scribbled at the University of Wisconsin in Seattle. "Who can say whether it was Dylan's death that made Veron bury on to death himself?" asks the widow sadly. It was too, and seems unjust, that Dylan's life in Swansea was not as good a poet as Mr Hyde.

In this vain valley of ambition pleas cannot be bargained.
As in the spent Renaissance, life turns to the Ideal.
And thus, distrustful of its place, its plago, the hotting-up
Domain of Demos, it sets its transcendental cooker for
An hour beyond all frenzy to call us to that noble feast,
Interior sator, in dish to put before Self-Emperors.
Sitting in the nyctlo static of motels, what alexandrines
Have we to repel the public day? Form is a lazy witless
Seeing whatever it finds easiest to see. The classics are brought down
To courses on comparative belief. This is not the fault
Of idle teachers; rather such consummate victories were bought
At high rates once by calm custodians in rooms so
Humanistically exact for sunlight and approved debate
That when the trays were cleared and once the mercenaries had sworn
Past tapestry that muffled Tasso, only blows by brutes
Had style. Everything and everyone was clagorious for honesty,
The world became one Salon des Refusés. But do not look
Just at our telemetric world and its confined abattoirs:
Consider in its place academies a cone of several palaces
Where feudal waters sink into evening gold – what did
Those princes and those poets promise defenestrated Man?
Only to confuse his single fate with that of species,
Blood and the burdens of our winsome nature he
Might find a phantom for. Always there was elsewhere,
The Golden Age, the Innocentest Luthrum, a land on
Stalks beyond the eyes of youth. When the Prince had raged
Through statues, temples and the scrolls of his Isotta
He grafted Nature; he could think of welfare, care for
The nameless many casting his shadow on the square.
They took the hint; love alone will tell all shades of creatures.
They are one. Thus came the Proverbs of Democracy –
You will get the broad apotheosis you are waiting for,
You will put the gods inside you and make dash their king,
You will feel your nervous system a bland ordo –
And yet the gathering storm approaches, it seems that Man,
Turned by his tapestries to play Actaeon on the plain,
Cannot be redeemed. The youth his girl freed, the warrior
His tall challenge, the poet his obsession in the head,
A programme vulgar as the planet is unveiled:
Power and response, the Myth of Circumstance,
Great men impaled on history – nothing comes between
The goddess and her darkness, when the loves, disturbance
Of the common decencies of lust, that moment when she sees
Her prey, about to inherit the innocence of the world.

Peter Porter

Cold certitudes

Donald Davie

DICK DAVIS
Wisdom and Wilderness:
The Achievement of W. W. Winters
244pp. Athens: University of
Georgia Press.
£8.20/\$16.32

A poem is what stands
When imperceptible hands,
Feeling, have gone astray.
It is what one should say.
Few minds will come to this.
The poet's only bias
Is in cold certitudes
Lament, archaic, rude.
The tone of voice and the sentiment
(the one a mirror of the other) are
unmistakable: only one modern poet in
English ever spoke like this. The voice,
this unique, is irreplaceable: once
heard, it can never be forgotten. And
the poet who thus spoke can never be
dislodged from the canon, even though
he spoke with this authority in only a
few poems - far fewer than his
claimants want to pretend.

This would not be the case if the
voice were merely idiosyncratic,
unmistakable only in that sense. Might
it not be claimed, for instance, that the
voice of Robinson Jeffers is similarly
distinctive, therefore just as ir-
replaceable? No. For the voice that
speaks these verses, though not to be
confounded with any other voice that
has spoken in our time or for several
centuries before us, nevertheless is not
unprecedented: it is the voice of
Arthur W. Winters, but equally it is

the voice, or one of the voices, of
Thomas Wyatt and Ben Jonson,
George Gascoigne and Walter Raleigh.
It is therefore a voice from the past,
and yet not the voice of pastiche; a
voice that sounded once and then
seemed stilled through 300 years,
which now, for those few who can hear,
sounds once again. Such moments,
when the seemingly long dead rise
from their graves and walk again
are the most magical and the most
affecting in literary history and, for
some of us, in literary experience. It is
nothing less than rebirth, as when Ovid
and Lucan walk again in the pages
of John Dryden.

Such rebirths, though the evidence
of them is before our eyes and
sounding in any ears that will listen, are
commonly ruled out as impossible. In
particular there is no provision for
them in any discourse that proceeds by
setting up the *classique* against the
moderne, or the traditional against the
modern; and this is true even when
"the modern" is thought to have been
inaugurated as long ago as by Blake
or Kant or Wordsworth. Because,
through Winters' lifetime and up to
the present day, almost invariably set
up these false oppositions, there have
always been authorities with a special
interest in denying Winters's
endeavour and the criticism by which
he justified it, and in denying his
achievement.

He did not help his own cause;
embattled solitaires seldom do. There
are pages of his verse as well as his
prose that deserve to be derided; and
as he aged, ever more aware of being
isolated and misrepresented, he

wrote more and more such pages. In
particular, his last prose book, *Forms
of Discovery* (1967), is a disaster. By
that time he was writing a hardly any
poems; but he had never been prolific,
and had scorned those who were,
aligning himself with

Gascoigne, Ben Jonson, Creville, Raleigh,
Donne,
Poets who wrote great poems, one by one
And spaced by many years, each line an act
Through which few labor, which no man
rejoice.

There could hardly be a starker
contrast to that American tradition in
poetry - the central tradition, so many
Americans would claim - that runs
from Whitman's *Song of Myself*,
through Pound's unfinished and
unpublished *Cantos*, to Robert
Lowell's *Notebook*. The self-renewing
garrulity of such works will be
applauded by those for whom poetic
stability is a regularly spouting
fountain, and they will jeer at Winters
as a poet. But Pasternak, in this if in
nothing else on Winters's side,
declared rather vehemently that poetic
capacity, thought of as a fountain, on
the contrary is a sponge.

All the same, the four lines just
quoted serve to show how few of
Winters's poems meet his own exacting
standards. "Act/retract" - the rhyme is
satisfyingly crisp and exact, but not if
we pause to reflect that no one can
retract a statement except the person
who made it. Winters's apologists and
champions, Dick Davis among them,
argue for the propriety in the twentieth
century of using a form so time
honoured as the heroic couplet; but
they do not pause to consider whether

Winters's use of that form is
resourceful and adroit. Accordingly,
and lamentably, Winters and his
champions share with their antagonists
an astonishing flippancy towards the
greatest master of couplet rhyme in
English, Alexander Pope. By the same
token we look in vain in Winters for
any exercise in the Elizabethan plain
style so sustained as Raleigh's "The
Lie". Instead we get, directed against
the "socially conscious" verse of the
1930s, four stanzas on the pattern of:

Change or repose is wrought
By steady arm and thought:
The fine indignant sprout
Confesses all.

This is truly fine and memorable, and
as apposite in the 1930s as the 1930s.
But let no one pretend that it
competes, in inventive handling of a
tight and intricate stanza, with the best
of Raleigh or Wyatt, nor with (to
recognize another of Winters's
acknowledged masters) the best of
Thomas Hardy. Even in his early
Imagist phase - for Winters had in-
vested heavily in modernism, before he
turned against it - his performances are
often portentous and foolish when
compared with the best of what
was done in that mode by his con-
temporaries. At every stage he
chose among available models and
masters with so earnestness, an
intelligent scruple, that is exemplary;
but when it came to practising verse
in the mode decided on (for the
Elizabethan plain style was only one
such mode), Winters was often heavy-
handed.

Surprisingly - dismayingly indeed,
for those who know Dick Davis as an
ambitious poet along Wintersian lines,

also as a trenchant though good-
humoured reviewer - *Wisdom and
Wilderness* nowhere concerns itself
with the minutiae on which everything
else depends, with how, for instance,
Winters manages line-endings, across
or not across rhyme. Instead the
discussion proceeds at a level
comfortably far above such trivial
particulars, in a realm where Winters
is aligned with Aristotle and
Aquinas against Emerson (justly) and
Wordsworth (unjustly). Even T. S.
Eliot, to whom Winters was opposed
far more virulently than he was to
Pound (and Davis is good on the
compelling reasons why), figures in
this book in terms of his professed
opinions, not as one who structured
and fastened together lines of verse in a
particular way. Accordingly Davis is
far more at ease with Winters the critic
and literary theorist than with Winters
the poet, though even as theorist and
polemicist Winters is ever brought
into conjunction with those of his peers
who conceived for him through several
years a real though guarded and
apprehensive respect - notably Allen
Tate and John Crowe Ransom. Davis,
I suspect, wrote this book several years
ago, and after the typescript had been
out of his hands for several years in
Athens, Georgia, chose not to update
it. Certainly there are recent and not so
recent testimonies which he neither
cites nor apparently has taken note of
by (among others) David Levin, Thom
Gunn, Albert Guerard, Turner
Cassidy, and Gabriel Pearson (in *The
Review*). Winters the poet, I'm afraid
we must say, deserved something
better. But then, as he saw himself,
"Few minds will come to this."

The Victorians were endowed with
widespread sources of imagery, in
which the Christian *peregrinatio*
(filtered through the Romantic
poets) was only one strand. In the
exfoliation of these patterns in

everything still remains to be said. So
he sets himself the task of saying more,
much more than has been said before;
he succeeds magnificently; succeeds
too in leaving the inaffable even more
 tantalizingly illuminated.

Poe's activity (ba has always been
averse to being "misread" in poetry) is
therefore not merely astounding in its
evasion of reality; it also has
profound philosophical implications.
Reading him, we become more con-
scious of the nature of language and
reality, and of the disparity between
the two. Meditating on his brilliant
comparison of a rose-bush to a
fighting cock, we begin to see that it
is the difference between the two which
counts: it is the mind's effort to identify
the two, and its failure to do so beyond
a certain point, which produces the
vividness of the effect. His language
points outside itself, to a world more
real than before.

The present book contains a mere
sixty-four brief pages, dating almost
entirely from April 1950, and besides
several descriptive passages (including
the highly successful "as Poirier"),
several important theoretical state-
ments. Ponge is ably aided by his
own words and things. Hence
things for grasp both of our own ideas
and of external objects is only partial,
at least we can be sure of the latter's
permanence: we can progressively
extend our grasp of them. He restates
the moral quality of his search: the
author needs "scruples, humility and
tenacity" in the face of the object. His
regards artistic activity as analogous
to that of the scientist. The artist is a
"seeker"; his activity is "an authentic
form of research"; he is a "bovine de-
laborator"; above all, he is not
interested in his finds as such; he
continues to search. For Ponge, as for
the modern scientist, the concept of
activity. Consequently, as records of
his texts as "documents", as records of
stages in the search for truth.

I cannot close, however, without
insisting on the presence every page in
Poe's of wit and humanity. His poems
are full of human feeling. They
communicate the genuine shock we
delight at something never so well seen
or said before. He has succeeded in
adding to our awareness, not human
characters in the style of La Bruyere
but a set of much more intriguing and
mysterious personalities. The
scrutable objects, animals and plants
which share our world with us.

Encounters with things

Graham D. Martin

FRANCIS PONGE
Nique de l'avant-pensée
70pp. Paris: Gallimard. 55fr.
2/01 023942 X

Yves Bonnefoy has written of the
amazing concrete particularity of
things, the capacity of our poetry to
"photograph" the object, and implied
the incapacity of French to achieve the
same effect. Francis Ponge, however,
has spent his life disproving Bonnefoy's
claim. His texts, single-mindedly de-
voted to such things as rain, fire, an
oyster, a pebble, mistletoe, a cigarette,
etc., seem to pull these intractable
objects out of the page to speak to us.

Yet many years ago, in *Probleme*,
Ponge (with more than a touch of his
habitual modesty) described his
literary progress in these terms:

1. I recognized the impossibility of
expressing myself; 2. I fell back on
the attempt to describe things (but at
once wanted to transcend them!);
3. I recognized (recently) the
impossibility not only of expressing
but also of describing things.

He resolved therefore "to publish
descriptions or accounts of failures to
describe". At first sight such modesty
seems puzzling. His reactions to things
have always been remarkable: he has
always found it possible "in the case of
the simplest things, to make an infinity
of statements consisting entirely of
remarks never before made". And do
not texts such as his orange or his
apricot tempt us to say that words
could hardly be more concrete?

But this is precisely the problem with
which Ponge is so passionately
concerned. Words are not realities, are
indeed totally unlike realities; and in a
sense, the greater the writer's success,
the more obvious the disparity
between words and things. Hence
many of Ponge's later texts contain not
only a "finished" set of phrases which
set the subject of his interest in a new
light, touch it with humour and
"bring it alive"; they also relate his
struggle to describe the object, they
record different stages of the writing,
including his own sense of in-
sufficiency, they continually rub the
reader's nose in the impossibility of the
whole task. In respect of the most
everyday objects, as he says, "everything
has not been said, but also

philosophy are central to the tale". The
topics in question are the sympathetic
interest in the self and the methods
of Lockean epistemology. Taken
together they provide stories with a
main character who frees himself from
false mental associations; this process
is labelled a "chain of becoming".

Having devoted the first third of the
book to an elaboration of these terms,
Keener then applies them to certain
fictional works. The results are not
encouraging: in most cases the analysis
seems remote from the material.
Guillevin's *Travels* becomes a book
about the hero's flight from self-
assessment as *Rasselas* is declared to
be "too provocative, psychologically
in disguise". Our attention is drawn
to the "tempting" resemblance of
Candide's name to Condillac.

Keener is so weighed down by his
"chain of becoming" that he never lifts
his eyes beyond the eighteenth
century. He seems unaware that
writers like Johnson and Voltaire were
working within a particular framework
of aesthetic assumptions, one which
included the epic as the principal
narrative form and their use of the tale

Life as fashioned

A. O. J. Cockshut

AVROM FLEISHMAN
Figures of Autobiography: The
Language of Self-Writing in the
Victorian and Modern England
486pp. University of California
Press. £25.
0 520 04666 8

Though some autobiographers are
flars, and many more misinterpret
themselves, it is in the nature of
autobiography to claim to tell the
truth. The testing of this claim,
whether by internal evidence or by
external facts, determined for a long
time most critical approaches. Avrom
Fleishman's book is a distinguished,
though by no means faultless, member
of a new class of autobiographical
criticism; the stress here is on the
aesthetic quality, and autobiography is
assimilated to imaginative literature,
rather than to history. For the
historical approach the distinction
between an autobiography and a
novel, which, like *David Copperfield*,
involves personal memories, is
absolutely clear. The aesthetic is tenuous.
We need not be surprised that this
book awards about the same space to
each kind.

For Fleishman self-writing (a term
which includes both kinds) since the
time of Wordsworth is characterized by
a new richness of symbolic reference:

the Victorians were endowed with
widespread sources of imagery, in
which the Christian *peregrinatio*
(filtered through the Romantic
poets) was only one strand. In the
exfoliation of these patterns in

Western art and literature,
traditional typology is not left
behind, but a new symbolic action is
generated: the enriching of a biblical
heritage with the whole history of its
aesthetic versions, where what
counts is not the specific content of the
original figure but its malleability for
life fashioning. The type
becomes a palimpsest.

This passage, as well as giving the key
to the book's argument, may serve as
an example of Fleishman's style. It
cannot be called verbose, because it is
packed with meaning; but one does
come to long for an occasional short
sentence in Saxon words.

For Fleishman, then, an auto-
biography is more an invention
than a quest; and the author is not so
much asking "How did I come to be
what I am?" as "How do I choose to
present myself?" The stress is on the
writing of autobiography (or novel),
rather than on what is prior to writing,
the struggle to understand oneself and
one's history.

There are two obvious dangers in
such a critical method. Fleishman has
been aware of both, though this has not
enabled him always to avoid them. The
first is that typology may encroach
beyond its proper limits. In considering
St Augustine, for instance, we may
rightly note the parallels with Virgil.
As in the Aeneid, Carthage is
associated with sensuality, and the
final goal is Rome. But the decisive
scenes in the *Confessions* occur in
Milan, to which there is no Virgilian
parallel. Why? Well, just because in
life they did. And, steeped in Genesis
as he was, we might have expected
Augustine to recount the stealing of
apples. But as he actually does, he
describes stealing pears.

He begins by mistaking Newman's
metaphysical sense of the self as
undeniable reality with egotism. How
odd that it did not occur to Fleishman
that many people who have never

The other danger is more serious; we
may lose in the contemplation of
literary delights that sense of the
uniqueness of each person which it is
the special glory of autobiography to
show. Every major literary form from
lyric poem to historical novel does
something better than any other form
can do it; this is what autobiography
does.

Fleishman's method works (and very
well) when the author he is considering
was himself something of a fantasist.
Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* is a perfect
case for his treatment. *The Everlasting
No* is a tissue of literary references
which Fleishman can disentangle for
us. Ruskin is an intermediate case,
since his admitted determination to
dwell on happy things is halfway
towards shaping reality according to
the heart's desire. But the method
works ill with obstinate truth-tellers,
steeped in facts and documents, like
Newman and Mill. One can sym-
pathize with Fleishman's dilemma.
Should he omit the greatest and finest
examples of the genre? Or should he
apply to them a method at odds with
the drift and purpose of his own book?
Or should he try to make them fit the
pattern? He chose the third
alternative, which was bound to be
unsuccessful. It need not, however,
have been as unsuccessful as it actually
is, if only Fleishman knew more
history. It is perilous to write about
Newman's *Apologia* without first being
steeped in the history of the events and
the ideas about which Newman was
writing.

Since Wayne C. Booth's *The Rhetoric
of Fiction* (1961) made the concept
respectable, rhetoric has often been
invoked as an approach to the novel.
The narrator's self-representation (e
variant on the orator's cultivation of
ethos to convince his audience of his
sincerity and reliability), techniques of
description, methods of argument - these
and other matters have been
clarified by reference to classical
rhetoric.

Zahava McKeon, who studied with
Booth and is married to Richard
McKeon, author of some of the most
penetrating studies of logic and
rhetoric produced in our time, wants to
go beyond such partial applications of
rhetoric. Drawing on the work of her
husband and other members of the
Chicago Aristotelians (whose history
has been recently told by McKeon and
Booth in *Profession 82*), she proposes a
comprehensive theory which treats
novels as "fictive arguments",
"structured arguments which can move
minds to belief". Deliberately
eschewing the method of Aristotle, or
Booth, who analyse texts at first hand
and classify recurring elements, she
first establishes a theoretical model
and then reads texts in its light; a
somewhat back-to-front procedure,
one might think. And whereas other
critics stress the author-reader
relationship, the arousal of emotions
and the control of judgment, where
"structure" also implies a shaping of
events, feelings and values, she
discusses structure in terms drawn
from court-room rhetoric. In the early
and schematic *De inventione* Cicero
made a four-fold classification of
status, the issues basic to all disputes:
the conjectural (what is the fact at
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are useful tips to the advocate
preparing his speech, but clearly no
one ever wrote a novel in this way, and
it is hard to see how they can be applied
in the reading of novels.

In fact, what McKeon really seems
to be doing is making a classification
system. Combining Cicero on *status*
with Aristotle's dictum that every work
of literature has a beginning, middle
and end, she defines four types of
novel. The conjectural novel is
organized in terms of beginning,
presenting "doing, speech and feeling
limited only by the initial
discriminations of the agent's
unconditioned beginning"; examples
are Grass's *The Tin Drum*, and Sartre's
The Reprieve. The qualitative novel,
organized in terms of end, is marked by
discovery and reversals, so that its
end "qualifies everything that
precedes". An example is *Portrait of
the Artist as a Young Man*, where

the critic of his vocation as
an artist discovers "the reversal", that he
must leave Ireland. ("Reversal" must
not be taken literally; it seems to mean
change of direction.) The transitive
novel is organized in terms of middle,
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"intellectual structure" is then
"coincident with the being of the
universe": example, paradoxically
enough, *Death in Venice* ("the end is
simply still another embodiment of the
whole"). Finally, the definitive novel
of sequence, drawing on all three
modes, resembles grammar in that
elements are interlinked, but differs
from grammar in that the elements
are conceived of as real entities";
such is Mrs Dalloway. These categories
are explained further in the second part
of the book, with analyses of *Dog
Years*, *The French Lieutenant's
Woman*, Robert Coover's first novel,
The Origin of the Branks, and two
texts by Flannery O'Connor, *The
Violent Bear It Away*, and a late story,
"The Lame Shall Enter First" - an
unhappily chosen piece of fiction.

The critic of this book, told that he
can invent any novel according to any
of the four modes, and that as a reader
he has been invented by the author,
must wonder what kind of audience he
himself constitutes, and whether he is a
judge, or just a *theorist*, or looker-on.
Although ingenious, this attempt to
subsume all fiction under a model
derived from the idiosyncratic fusion of
two concepts formulated to answer
quite different questions in wholly
different contexts, must be judged
artificial and unconvincing. The book
has evidently been long gestated and
has many perceptive observations,
incidental to its thesis, yet it operates
on too high a level of abstraction,
extending theoretical arguments
without confronting them with
awkward objections or negative
instances. Above all, the categories
themselves are too generalized and do
not succeed in defining and
distinguishing novels from each other.
It seems too broad to set the
"transitive novel of ideas and
feelings" against "the conjectural
novel of styles and manners". Where
would one put Stendhal? How can the
conjectural novel be organized "to call
attention to the purely linguistic
character of novels, to throw into relief
the words qua words"? Can one read
words without noting meaning?
And how can the "transitive
organization", excluding beginning
and end, embody "the intelligible
structure of the universe"? It is
unlikely that either Thomas Mann or
Flannery O'Connor thought in such
cosmic terms, or structured their
novellas to match.

The best part of the book is the
conclusion, with its analyses of Coover
and O'Connor, especially the latter.
Here the "exhaustive matrix" of
Aristotle's "verbalistic critical
instrument" of Cicero, the
Reperire. The qualitative novel,
organized in terms of end, is marked by
discovery and reversals, so that its
end "qualifies everything that
precedes". An example is *Portrait of
the Artist as a Young Man*, where

than Pope Leo XIII, who honoured
him? Similar, though less glaring,
mistakes arise from his determination
to see Mill's education in terms of the
Evangelical tradition in which his
father had been reared.
It may seem ungenerous to devote so
much of a short review of a learned and
useful book to its weakest passages.
But I do so because they raise a point
of general importance. Much current
criticism is much stronger on theory
than on history. Professor Fleishman
has a knowledge of critical writings on
autobiography which far exceeds my
own. What he does not have, in equal
degree, is a knowledge of the society in
which his autobiographers lived, and of
the events, the ideas and the people of
which they wrote. I hope I am not
alone in believing that the knowledge
he lacks is at least as important for the
practice of literary criticism as that he
so well shows.

Aiming to convince

Brian Vickers

ZAHAVA KARL MCKEON
Novels and Arguments: Inventing
Rhetorical Criticism
260pp. Chicago University Press.
£18.
0 226 56034 1

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artificial and unconvincing. The book
has evidently been long gestated and
has many perceptive observations,
incidental to its thesis, yet it operates
on too high a level of abstraction,
extending theoretical arguments
without confronting them with
awkward objections or negative
instances. Above all, the categories
themselves are too generalized and do
not succeed in defining and
distinguishing novels from each other.
It seems too broad to set the
"transitive novel of ideas and
feelings" against "the conjectural
novel of styles and manners". Where
would one put Stendhal? How can the
conjectural novel be organized "to call
attention to the purely linguistic
character of novels, to throw into relief
the words qua words"? Can one read
words without noting meaning?
And how can the "transitive
organization", excluding beginning
and end, embody "the intelligible
structure of the universe"? It is
unlikely that either Thomas Mann or
Flannery O'Connor thought in such
cosmic terms, or structured their
novellas to match.

The symbolic past

John Sturrock

WILLIAM R. SIEBENSCHUH
Fictional Techniques and Factual
Works
183pp. University of Georgia Press.
\$18.
0 8203 0636 3

William R. Siebenschuh has gravitated
to the question which all students and
even plain readers of biography or
autobiography soon come to ask: how
can these works be both literary and
true? The high degree of artifice which
their writing entails surely militates
against their credibility. Professor
Siebenschuh's answer to this
troublesome question is to avoid it, by
insisting that the usual separation of
"literary art and factual statement"
need not apply, that the opposition
between them can be collapsed in his
own assertion that the literary art in
some cases is the factual statement.

Coming to see

John Hope Mason

FREDERICK M. KEENER
The Chain of Becoming: The
Philosophical Tale, The Novel,
and a Neglected Realism of the
Enlightenment
New York: Columbia
University Press. \$39 (paperback,
\$19).
0 231 04001 6

The novel had a bad name in the
eighteenth century; now it is other
names which are treated with reserve
or suspicion. Among them is the
philosophical tale, which this book sets
out to rescue from neglect. According
to Frederick M. Keener, at a specific
philosophical tale aims at a specific
kind of realism, "the realism of
philosophical assessment", and it has a
distinctive theme, the need for
"transformation in mental life". It is
philosophical not because it may be
aimed to propose a particular
philosophy or idea, but because the
narrative form and their use of the tale

rather than the novel reflects those
assumptions. A hero freeing himself
from illusion, to find some acceptable
form of truth is one of the oldest
themes of narrative literature, and its
treatment in these works has little to do
with Lockean epistemology. For that
to have been the case we should have
had much more emphasis on the origin
and genealogy of the illusion, not
merely a criticism of certain mental
attitudes for being false.

Moreover, while it is true that
Guillevin, and other and Rousseau are
fictional characters and their own
development (or lack of it) is
important, that should not displace the
attention given in the tales to the
worlds they inhabit, nor, most
important of all, the authors' feelings
about that world - Swift's sombre
satire, Voltaire's mordant wit,
Johnson's exiles' judgment. These
aspects scarcely feature in Keener's
account. The discussions of the *Letters
Persanes* and the *Abbey* devoted
principally to *Northanger* and
Persuasion, suffer less from this
narrowness of approach and these
narrownesses are interesting, though
chapters are interesting, though
whether these works can be termed
philosophical tales is another matter.

Keener is so weighed down by his
"chain of becoming" that he never lifts
his eyes beyond the eighteenth
century. He seems unaware that
writers like Johnson and Voltaire were
working within a particular framework
of aesthetic assumptions, one which
included the epic as the principal
narrative form and their use of the tale

Alarming domesticities

Vicki Feaver

HERMIONE LEE (Editor)
Stevie Smith: A Selection
224pp. Faber. £8.50 (paperback,
£3.50).
0 571 13029 1

"So there! What glory!" boasted Stevie
Smith to one of her friends or he
told that at Eton's Fourth of June
celebrations in 1968 the Captain of the
School had recited her poem "Do Take
Muriel Out". One of the things she
most enjoyed about her success was the
opportunity it provided for resching
young audiences. She would have been
delighted with Faber's new Stevie
Smith, a selection designed especially
for students.

Of course her work is already widely
available. The bumper *Collected
Poems* (Allen Lane, 1975) has just
been reprinted, and there is a Penguin

The Rise of
Colleges

The trading interest

J. M. J. Rogister

THOMAS J. SCHARPER

The French Council of Commerce 1700-1715: A Study of Mercantilism after Colbert
305pp. Columbus: Ohio State University Press. \$30.
0 8142 0341 8

Despite the impression created by the narrow confines of the title of his book, Thomas J. Scharper has produced what amounts to a refutation of Lionel Rothkrug's celebrated *Opposition to Louis XIV*, published in 1965. Scharper belongs to the revisionist school which holds that the latter part of Louis XIV's reign (variously dated as beginning anywhere from 1679 to 1688) should not be seen as a period of decline accompanied by economic and military disasters, an ageing king, incompetent ministers and the virtual bankruptcy of the state. Thanks to the work of Ragnarild Hatton and others, this revisionist approach has already brought about a reconsideration of the old king's stateroom and of the skills of his later ministers. Now the attack on orthodoxy turns to the economic sphere. The creation of the Council of Commerce in 1700, allegedly under pressure from a disgruntled trading community, is usually cited as an argument for the traditional view, mainly on the strength of Rothkrug's work. Scharper demonstrates that its creation is a stronger argument in the hands of the revisionists.

The idea of royal consultations with the merchant community was far from new in 1700. Louis XI had conferred with merchants in 1470; so later had Richelieu; and one of Colbert's chief assistants was Savary, author of *Le parfait négociant*, the standard handbook for businessmen of the *ancien régime*. From the late seventeenth century onwards the government displayed a growing interest in obtaining accurate estimates of the condition of the country as a whole. Colbert and his successors bombarded provincial intendants and businessmen with demands for surveys and statistics. The need for a Council of Commerce was compensated for in the 1690s by a unique set of circumstances within the ministerial structure. Internal commerce and manufactures fell within the responsibilities of the controller-general of the finances, but external trade was the province of the secretary for the navy. This distinction was blurred between 1690 and 1692 when both offices were held by Louis de Pontchartrain. From his elevation de Pontchartrain made moves to ensure that control of commerce should not revert to divided state that had prevailed before. Hence the creation of the Council of Commerce as a means of preventing future conflicts between two ministers. Pontchartrain convinced the king that such a council would give a central direction to trade and would also constitute a standing body from which both ministers could get expert advice. Scharper finds no evidence of disgruntled merchants, only of a monarch who was an enlightened reformer in the final period of his reign.

The council included a deputy from each of the eleven important commercial centres. Paris had two but these were appointed directly by the king. Tax-farmers were also summoned to some of its meetings. Facing the thirteen deputies were six *commissaires*: crown officials (including the two ministers). One long-term weakness of the new body was that, within the constricting structure of government, it was inferior to the other councils in several ways. It could not issue decisions in the form of *arrêts*. It lacked the royal presence, even its symbol of the royal chair. Finally, it could not count on the presence of two ministers, who preferred not to compete with each other for influence over the proceedings. A senior councillor *did* preside over the meetings, which were held in his own house.

The men who served as deputies were well qualified to evaluate commercial problems. Louis XIV chose the eminent banker Samuel Bernard to

represent Paris. The Fabre brothers of Marseille, Pion of Nantes and Anisson of Lyons were typical of the more active deputies. Many served the government in a variety of other ways as arbitrators or diplomats. Previously it was thought that the opinions of the deputies were a frontal assault on the body of economic policies brought to maturity by Colbert and known as mercantilism. Scharper reveals that there was little in them with which Colbert would have disagreed. The council was thoroughly mercantilist in the sense of favouring strong regulation of all aspects of the economy. Like Colbert himself, they wanted French trade to be free of restrictions. Since France had no gold or silver mines, foreign trade was the only means by which she could build up stocks of these precious metals. The deputies shared Colbert's static view of the world's resources, a view which contributed logically to war as it assumed that one country could only prosper at the expense of another. Scharper sees them as thoroughly traditional if compared with the English writers of the same period, like Dudley North and Nicholas Barbon, who were abandoning the mercantilist canon of bullionism, balance of trade and the static view of the nation's economy.

Yet these were the men who in their own way had helped to develop many areas of French commerce and industry. Drawing on the pioneering studies of J. S. Bromley and others, Scharper is able to confirm that this development occurred in the late part of the reign, when the economy is supposed to have been in decline, like everything else. In their memoranda the deputies tried to indicate means of improving trade: for instance, some felt that French textiles were overprotected and that wines, "our precious treasure", were much more in need of help, especially as the English were adapting themselves to the taste for Iberian wines.

To a greater extent than the government had wished, the cities represented in the Council of Commerce used that body to advance their own interests and to carry on regional rivalries, rather than pursue national goals. One of the Fabres even used a contact with the king's Jesuit confessor to secure advantages for Marseille. But then with the exception of Paris the deputies were elected by local bodies and were expected to uphold the particular interests of their constituents. The cities were not always happy with the services of their deputies and might refuse to pay them. Despite these limitations, the crown had achieved its goal: it had broadened the decision-making machinery on both local and national levels. At a time when most other European states were setting up or reviving similar institutions, Louis XIV's Council of Commerce had a wider range of interests and showed a much higher degree of cooperation between the French king and the merchant community than has been previously recognized. A tragedy for the *ancien régime* may well have been its abolition in 1722; it was revived in 1730 but in a much attenuated and less influential form. Louis XV and his *laissez-faire* ministers had become, it seems, either too grand or too bureaucratic to indulge in consultations with mere mercantilist merchants.

Some of the time which Scharper has brought out more the importance of the personal relations between kings and individuals in his account. The historian of the eighteenth century may well savour more than the author has done the fact that the parents of President Mériam of the Argentin brothers and of Maupassant had all once made their way to meetings of the Council of Commerce in the rue Pavée at the house of its chairman, himself the father of Chateaubriand. Daguerre, these links helped to form the friendships in the next generation. Nevertheless, Scharper's scholarly work constitutes an important landmark in our knowledge of the last years of Louis XIV's reign.

Portrait: Thomas J. Scharper, Ohio State University Press, New York, NY 1982.

Dividing and ruling

Roger Mettam

NORBERT ELIAS

The Court Society
Translated by Edmund Jephcott
301pp. Oxford: Blackwell. £15.
0 631 19670 6

Early modern European courts, and especially that of France with its absolute monarchs, eccentric courtiers, complex etiquette and luxurious decoration, provide a wealth of subject material for the lurid biography and the lavish picture-book. Some of their authors even masquerade as historians, but Norbert Elias unmasks them and reveals them as mere chroniclers, gossip and romanticizers. His own mission is to consider a problem which has been neglected by these trivializers, and also by serious social historians who have concentrated on lower levels of society - what was the purpose of the elaborate court structure in the social and political context of the time?

This book was first published in German in 1969, before most of the recent regional and institutional histories which have so discredited the cliché of Louis XIV's absolutism. Yet Elias, using the same evidence as the earlier historians who sustained the absolutist myth, comes to much more perceptive conclusions. The concept of absolute power in a seventeenth-century context is, as he says, a total anachronism. Royal authority was regularly challenged by other power groups in the kingdom - aristocratic, administrative, ecclesiastical, municipal, commercial - and the elaborate court was one way of trying to control them. Had the king been absolute, Versailles would have been unnecessary.

The chief concern of the French monarch was to enhance the prestige of the throne, especially by defending the realm against outside attack. The daily administration of the kingdom was of little interest and was largely left to local institutions. Any dealings between the king and his subjects were handled by courtiers, who acted as intermediaries between the centre and the provinces. The court was therefore the only society of which the king had direct experience, and he even

attempted to manage the provincial elites in the same way as he tried to manipulate powerful groups at court. Fortunately for the crown, these provincial and courtly factions spent as much time in internecine feuding as they did in opposing royal policy. As Elias rightly demonstrates, the success of Henri IV and Louis XIV was based, not on greater power, but on greater skill in maintaining these various social groups in a precarious equilibrium. In contrast, Richelieu and Mazarin created instability by provocative policies. Louis XV by his own irresolution.

Louis XIV assumed personal control of the government a mere eight years after the Fronde, when the whole of France had shivered its local animosities and had united, albeit briefly, against Mazarin. A restoration of orderly instability was therefore vital, even if it meant abandoning the reforming policies of the two cardinals. Accordingly the new ministers set out to placate each elite group, taking care not to offend others in the process. The strict rules of hierarchy and rank were tightened, and social mobility was severely discouraged. Individual ambition might therefore be thwarted, but so were the ambitions of one's rivals.

It was particularly important to balance the old landed nobility against the new administrative nobles, two powerful strata which disliked each other but had joined together during the Fronde. The king needed the former as army officers and diplomats, the latter as officials. There were also factions within the old nobility itself, and it was in the royal interest to keep all these tensions gently simmering. The crown was the sole source of the favours which aristocrats sought in their endless battles to outdo their fellows - whether in the form of pensions, titles, offices or grants of revenues. Louis, living his entire life in public, was thus able to hold their attention throughout the day, as they watched for any royal gesture towards their rivals. The elaboration of etiquette enabled Louis to make symbolic signs of displeasure, arousing expectations or apprehension that more tangible rewards might follow.

Louis was himself a prisoner of this system. Not only did he have to spread his patronage among all groups at

court, but he too had to be bound by the rigidity of etiquette because it was by this means that he demonstrated the distance between the throne and the various levels of the nobility. Moreover, although he could withdraw his personal esteem from individual courtiers, he could not take away their rank. The unfavoured but prestigious noble might become a subversive influence, and go undetected, for dissimulation was an essential quality for survival in this competitive society. The only outsiders in this tightly regulated world were the royal ministers, humbler men who had been given great authority by the king. They were not integrated into the hierarchy and the etiquette, which served to remind them that they depended entirely on their patron and that, unlike the great nobles, they could be stripped of all their powers and cast into oblivion, as some of them were.

Under Louis XIV, therefore, the centre of the government was still the personal household of the king, and family ties and personal friendships were still the motivating forces in political groupings. Away from Versailles, the nobles held their own courts and dispensed their own patronage in their Paris houses, living with a degree of magnificence which was strictly related to the prestige of their family. Appropriately lavish display was an essential expression of position in society. Truly, *noblesse oblige*. As "bourgeois" does of balancing one's tastes, we are even considered in this context, as if noble families fell into debt, and if they reached the point where they could no longer sustain the proper life-style, they simply withdrew from society. The rules did not permit anyone to live in a manner unworthy of his rank.

Elias has therefore written a fascinating social history of the court, free from anachronistic value judgements and from romantic postulations. Somewhat perversely, he considers himself to be an empirical sociologist and not a social historian, but his methods and conclusions are those of the best kind of history. Only in his, or his translator's, numerous lapses into jargon - "dual-front classes", "affection", "distanciation" - does the sociologist intrude, but these ineffectualities of style cannot destroy the merits of this excellent book.

Fertilizing the colonies

F. V. Parsons

ANTONY THERALL SULLIVAN

Thomas-Robert Bugeaud: France and Algeria, 1784-1849, Politics, Power, and the Good Society
216pp. Connecticut: Archon. 0 208 01969 3

If the name of Bugeaud is invoked today it is probably as that of the apostle and practitioner of military excess, in both France and Algeria. The altercations view of a successful conqueror who was also an intelligent African administrator and colonist, in retirement, Antony Sullivan, however, considers that a "compact" biography of Bugeaud is overdue, and he seeks to include what are held to be neglected aspects of his subject's life as agriculturalist, analyst of foreign affairs, speech-making deputy, defender of the 1815 and 1830 constitutions against both Ultra and revolutionary extremists, and even as political theorist.

Certainly, Bugeaud had a varied career. Growing up in troubled, revolutionary times he substituted a close connection with and understanding of the foreign countryside for a formal education. Military service from 1804 brought experience and promotion in the Peninsular campaign. Suspect after 1815 because of his belated adherence to Napoleon, he joined the Hundred Days. Bugeaud was best known as a developer of his family estates and advocate of improved cultivation of the land. He was elected to the Chamber and restored to the army list in 1831. A gradual development with

Algeria, a country which he had at first devalued as infertile and an "immense danger" to France, then led to his becoming governor-general there from 1841 to 1847, a post which brought him fame and honours. After a brief period in Paris, where his advocacy of major military action in February 1848 was unsuccessful, he died from cholera in 1849. Whether all this can be fitted into a "consistent whole", as Sullivan hopes, is another question.

Not all the arguments he presents are convincing. Opposition such as Bugeaud's to "adventurism" abroad (France was ultimately a perhaps unfortunate exception) for fear of repercussions at home was nothing unusual at the time, while debating whether an alliance with Russia or England would be more likely to induce Prussia to cede the Rhineland reveals only a familiar French egoism and misjudgment. Domestically, his dislike of extremes and support of a *juste milieu*, like his belief in "peasantism", "agrarian traditionalism", "paternalism", and "anti-modernism" and "socialist holism", do not necessarily make Bugeaud obscure, or a political philosopher. His concentration on agricultural improvement was hardly an innovation; any more than the use of clever and manners and his barbed motto, "by the sword and the plough", had a good Roman background.

It is still the Algerian part of Bugeaud's story which is of most interest. As even a severe critic like Charles André Julien allows, Bugeaud's military tactics, if later they became commonplace, were noteworthy at the time, and his overall attitude was preferable to that of some

of the colonists. His attempts to develop the country, with the soldier as the best colonist (in practice, like the Arabs, they were not too fond of the plough), are connected by Sullivan with similar efforts Bugeaud made in southern France, thought as with the links between his military strategy in Algeria and lessons learned from the guerrilla war in Spain, Sullivan insists are not new.

He sees Bugeaud as a political moderate who became increasingly "hard", the measures he took to win a cruel war in north Africa having led to a stress on violence which was to affect France in both 1848 and 1871, while his "peasant" views on the soil, work, family, religion and *paire* were crucial to his avowedly being hailed as a suitable exemplar by Vichy. But neither the use of force nor the conception of a well-ordered society were new features in France. Bugeaud not, more simply, a man of self-assurance and conviction of the rightness of his opinions, with a talent for publicity, ruthlessness, and more than three men in duels, and more than his fair share of energy, luck and ambition? He also had an eye for the main chance, and above all the military skills - even if these included disobeying laconic instructions while exacting strict obedience from his own subordinates - which a community may at times need.

Mr Sullivan is justified, however, in his hope that his book will be useful for an understanding of French and Algerian history in the first half of the nineteenth century. His bibliography and his heroic efforts to dig up and handwrite in Cour-Met and departmental archives, give it further value.

Blueprints

Colin Greenland

ISAAC ASIMOV, CHARLES G. VAUGHAN AND MARTIN GREENBERG (Editors)

Isaac Asimov Presents the Best Science Fiction of the 19th Century
316pp. Gollancz. £9.95.
0 575 03305 3

Isaac Asimov, the Lapidus of the editorial triumvirate, has provided this volume with a slight but sensible introduction and a name to erect in one-and-a-half inch capitals on every page. This is not dishonest. The anthology is not scholarly; copy texts are not acknowledged, and anonymous annotations to the contributions by Hoffman and Poe have somehow been caught up in the editorial net, nineteenth-century opinions and spellings intact. The equally anonymous new editorial matter seems incongruous, with its remarks that Poe "did" on a bender, and that "the public went wild over" Sherlock Holmes. This is a popular collection directed at science fiction readers who are as interested in the past as Asimov insists they must be in the future. It is responsible and thorough, parading not only Hoffman, Poe, Conan Doyle and Wells, but also less familiar names: Edward Page Mitchell, Robert Ouncan Milne, Grant Allen.

Science fiction, Asimov observes, could not exist before the nineteenth century, when science crystallized out from natural philosophy and, more importantly, "the rate of technological change became great enough to notice in a single lifetime". Brian Stableford has traced the first use of the term "science fiction" to 1851, by William Wilson (not Watson, as the present volume has it). Between then and Hugo Gernsback's first "science fiction" magazine in 1926, the constituent elements of the genre were coming together, as this anthology amply demonstrates. Here are time-travel, natural catastrophe, anti-gravity, alien invasion, utopia and telepathy; no

space journeys, but a submarine expedition instead. The earlier stories here are by Hoffman, Poe, Hawthorne, and of course Mary Shelley. They are relevant but equivalent. The science is alchemy, its practitioners barely distinguishable from magi; significantly, all three are diabolic. Poe's story "A Descent into the Meelstrom" has no scientist as such, but does prefigure the sf form in which cunningly applied physics extricates a protagonist from a disastrous predicament. By the mid-century this equation of logic and power had caught on. Science was seen as the source of an infinite flow of novelties, philosophical and technological. The excitement overrode the Romantic fear of artifice and the meddling intellect. It is difficult now to appreciate the righteous rage of Hawthorne, denouncing botanical grafting as "adultery" and the resulting hybrids as "the monstrous offspring of man's depraved fancy".

In the eleven stories from the latter part of the century there is only one evil scientist, the ruthless bio-engineer in Jack London's "A Thousand Deaths". The others are authoritative expositors, innocent tinkers, courageous explorers, social pioneers, or aviators. It may be the bias, accidental or preferential, of the editors, but it certainly seems as if the new Promethean curse was suspended for some years. If the hero couldn't quite escape the vengeance of Nature by balloon or bathysphere, he could probably still outrun it on his bicycle, with a bit of speed pedalling, and a puncture repair kit safely tucked inside his wallet. Though Milne's aviator and Wells's submarine die while Allen's velocipedist survives, the moral is not hubris, but the sheer fragility of prototypes. The genre too was a prototype. It was enough to portray the scientist as a hero; to imagine, as Edward Page Mitchell does, that people might go backwards in time; to describe, like Edward Bellamy, a race of happy telepaths. The idea of fitting such components together in a plot, to make, a complex, intricate, highly articulated and finely responsive apparatus known as science fiction, came later. These are the blueprints.

True Humans in Dreamtime

John Clute

MICHAEL CONEY

Cat Karina
220pp. Gollancz. £7.95.
0 575 03273 1

Coy, colourful and cosy, *Cat Karina* could be nothing but a novel of science fantasy. The title alone tells us that it will be set thousands upon veggie thousands of years hence on a planet just like home, which may or may not be called Old Earth. In this case it is indeed called Old Earth. Old Earth is crammed, like the hot-house of the sci-fi stable, with dozens upon dozens of denizens of the sci-fi stable. The reader of *Cat Karina* encounters characters such as the True Humans, who unnervingly resemble Neanderthal Man, and the Specialists, like Cat Karina, bred from human and jaguar genes, who do not. He also encounters a buzzing, bumbling, reminding flock of gods and godlings, land-whales and gurus, aliens and computers, birds and Mordecai N. Whist. All of them, stuffed cheek-by-jowl into the typical sci-fi Arcadia - in this case it is a tropical Brazil - are haunted by the alluring glaze of the deep past.

For the deep past explains all. At the heart of the sci-fi novel lies a rhetoric of enchantment by which science becomes legend, and cognition memory. There is nothing new under the sun. Only legends happen. If young Cat Karina can't remember her way out of trouble, then a *deus ex machina* - or, as in this book, a bevy of them - will pop onto the stage to tell her what was what in the Dreamtime, and how to obey that wisdom here and now. For the story of her life is a re-enactment.

What she must do is give up her virginity to a True Human for reasons having nothing to do with either young love or science - she hardly knows Raul, and no science-fictional barrier of the unknown is about to be broken by their predestined interbreeding. There is no biological speculation here. Indeed (for this is sci-fi) there is no

speculation at all. As in most novels in this newish genre, the story is ultimately about obedience. Karina obeys the ghosts and gurus who command her; nine months after the book climaxes on a high in a storm, and in its closing pages a child named John is born, bearing the glaze of the deep past on his brow.

John is the point of the whole story, and in future volumes of what is clearly intended to be a series, he is destined to have something to do with someone named something like Jesus. Something significant is about to happen (though not here); the hero of a thousand faces is about to leave on his shamanic trek to the heart of the world and back (but not yet). The trouble with *Cat Karina* as an example of sci-fi is that it's nothing more than a prelude to a sequel. Karina's life, and the lives of those who dog her path up and down the coast of Brazil, come to nothing but a prelude to the real

legend, which will be remembered some other time.

All the same, though the vox-pop mythopoeists of *Cat Karina* seems far too desultory and beside the point to awaken a sense of myth reborn, the genre, to which it makes a small contribution may well come to be the science fiction of the future. Let us return to Mordecai N. Whist. This distressful moniker represents Mr Coney's enigmatic acknowledgement of his debt to Cordwainer Smith, the American writer who formalized sci-fi as we know it a couple of decades ago, and who, in stories such as "The Ballad of Lost C'Mell", invented cat-people as we know them. As Smith realized in 1960, science fiction, bereft of "mythic" plumbing, might well fizzle out as technology continued to have the jump on the human imagination. What was needed was a poet. Smith was a bad one; Coney is worse.

Criminal proceedings

E. V. CUNNINGHAM

The Case of the Kidnapped Angel
180pp. Gollancz. £6.95.
0 575 03265 0

Sergeant Maso Mnsutu, the Beverly Hills Japanese-American policeman who is into Zen, the other side of the rubber truncheon, looks into the case of a kidnapped film star's wife, taking the top off as pretty a can of worms as Hollywood has seen for some time. A slick, professional piece of work with an unusual, but not too esoteric detective.

PETER TURNBULL

Fair Friday
189pp. Collins. £6.95.
0 00 231335 9

Middle-aged Glasgow journalist is beaten up and killed in a back alley; fumblingly trying his hand at investigative journalism, he's stumbled

over a big racket in the city. The crime is looked into by the Glasgow detectives who have appeared in Peter Turnbull's two earlier novels and who, by this time, are beginning to acquire distinct and individual personalities of their own. Well put together, very well written, with a Glaswegian background that's as hard and solid as the city granite.

WILLIAM GARNER

Think Big, Think Dirty
314pp. Heinemann. £7.95.
0 434 28260 X

It's usually a matter for self-congratulation when M15 catches a Soviet spy, unless, as is the case with Joseph Sattin, he is terminally ill and there is reason to suspect a devilishly ingenious Russian plot behind his surrender. Complex, slow-moving thriller which gradually draws the reader into its labyrinthine machinations and holds him in a vice-like grip.

T. J. Binyon

Sales of books and MSS

Sarah Bradford

English literature was the dominant theme of the last major book and manuscript sale of the summer and, since in such sales money is spent in direct relation to the scale and staying power of a literary reputation, they provided enlightening, if sometimes puzzling, examples of how literary pundits are placing their bets.

Christie's sale on July 20 contained mainly proven winners, including four stages of text verse by John Milton, a variant of the "Lines on Maria Beckford" with, as an added bonus on the verso, a fragment verse by her sister Cassandra. The manuscript, which came from Mrs Elsie Tritton's collection at Godmersham, was unrecorded and as such not excessively expensive at £5,480 to a private buyer. Indeed, the autograph manuscript of Somerset Maugham's essay "Jane Austen & Pride & Prejudice", part of the collection *Ten Novels and their Authors* which the remaining nine manuscripts are in the University of Texas, seemed relatively more so at £3,240, again to a private buyer. This too came from Godmersham, having been shared by Maugham to Mrs Tritton.

J. M. Barrie does not normally raise the bidding temperature to fever heat but Christie's was selling a variant fragment of Captain Hook's speech from *Peter Pan*, two octavo pages with substantial revisions - representative variations from the published text of 1928; a rare object since Barrie apparently destroyed the manuscript after revisions. In this revision Hook is suddenly struck by the appalling thought that, after twenty years' floating upoo, his villainy he might unwittingly have been

Peter Murray-Hill who also paid £3,024 for another variant Barrie manuscript, play, *Panaloan*. A domestic drama in one Act, with a presentation inscription by Barrie to his friend, Gerald du Maurier, a celebrated Captain Hook. More important from a scholarly point of view was a collection of fifty letters by Pusey to the Reverend H. A. Woodgate, a fellow member of the Oxford Movement. The letters by the Movement's central figure are largely unpublished and discuss the ideology of the Movement including Pusey's famous sermon on the Eucharist which led to his condemnation as a heretic and the shattering blow of Newman's conversion. With letters from other churchmen on doctrinal matters related to the Movement, this interesting collection was sold for only £540 to a private buyer. Part of Graham Greene's recent treatise on religious belief, an autograph draft of the story "How Father Quixote Became a Missionary", first printed in *The Tablet* in 1978 and afterwards used as the first chapter in the novel, *Missionary Quixote* (1982), was sold for £1,728 to Maugham. With it was a two-page autograph draft of the Preface in a limited edition in Los Angeles in 1980 describing it as "the first chapter of a novel which I am fairly certain will never be completed, but... not a bad beginning".

Irish interest, always strong in literature sales, was provided by the private papers of Douglas Hyde, the first President of the Republic and one of the leading champions of Gaelic literature. The collection, including an autograph material by Hyde and letters by Lady Gregory, George Russell, Roger Casement and W. B. Yeats, was bought by H. D. Lyon for £15,210. A book about Hyde, the well-connected clergyman, the Rev Norton Nichols, was bought for £14,580 by

the editor of *The Standard* criticizing a review of *The Doctor's Dilemma* with the perennial cry of the celebrity: "I am the victim of preconception as to my character and attitude towards life for which there is no warrant in my authentic utterances".

W. B. Yeats's letters to Dorothy Wellesley are well known but the collection of 123 letters by the poet sold by Christie's to Quarrich for £18,360, slightly under their expectations, contained all the amusing personal details considered unsuitable for publication in 1940, names of women friends, erotic imaginings, amusing sexual anecdotes, and such tit-bits of gossip as "There is a very pleasant man staying here... a friend of Lady Sackville". He says that she always insisted that her daughter was a man. When, Vita married she said: 'Ridiculous how can Vita have children. If there are any children it will be Harold that has them.' A fine series of twelve letters by Yeats to Douglas Hyde, including a discussion of his first book, *Fairy and Folk Tales of the Irish Peasantry*, was, however, unsold at £3,000, a failure symptomatic of the curious state of the market for Yeats demonstrated also later in the week at Sotheby's.

Sotheby's held a two-day sale of English literature manuscripts and books on July 21 and 22 where the field was again dominated by the tried and trusted of the literary world, although a large section devoted to living or near-contemporary writers provided a fascinating illustration of commercial estimates of the future of literary reputations.

Of the "nine" manuscripts, a good letter by Fanny Burney to Mrs Thrale, written while she was working on *Cecilia* made £2,640 to Quarrich, while the correspondence of a contemporary, the well-connected clergyman, the Rev Norton Nichols,

was acquired by Hoffman and Freeman for £17,600. Nichols was a friend of Thomas Gray and indeed the originals of some thirty letters by Gray to Nichols were removed from his collection and are now in the library at Eton College. Four hundred and fifty letters by Nichols and over 350 letters by his friends remain to provide a lively portrait of the life of a gentleman of leisure in London and abroad in the last decades of the eighteenth century, and of his meetings with such figures as Gibbon, Sir Joseph Banks, the Chevalier d'Eon and Sir Horace Mann.

Thirty-two lots of Dickens letters included two concerning *Hard Times* in which he inveighs against hard-faced capitalists: "My satire is against those who see figures and averages and nothing else... Who would take the average of cold in the Crimea during twelve months as a reason for clothing a soldier in nankeen when he would be frozen to death in fur...". The first was sold to Sawyer for £1,265 and the second for £880 to the same buyer.

Twentieth-century literature provided most of the surprises. While James Joyce was as strong as ever, with a published autograph letter, dated September 23, 1915, offering the still-unpublished *Dubliners* to William Heinemann, selling for £3,630 to attract buyers. A although a fine typed signed letter to his father referring to Maud Gonne and the "row" with Miss Horniman was bought by Meggs for £2,035, fourteen lots of Yeats letters, mainly to Lennox Robinson on Abbey Theatre affairs but with three to Sean O'Casey and including an unpublished draft of Yeats' statement, "The Abbey Theatre and the Government", remained unsold. The late of John Cowper Powys was also somewhat erratic, with a series of letters by Powys written between 1942 and 1962, to Gilbert Turner, dedicatee of *The Brazen Head*, selling to Quarrich for

£7,150 while the typescript of the first unabridged version of *Porbus*... which Powys considered to be his best book, was unsold at £3,200, as was the autograph first draft, heavily revised, of his study of Dostoevsky at £1,200. At £5,500 to Sawyer the archive of Elizabeth Taylor's literary manuscripts - ten of her novels, including *Mrs Palfrey at the Claremont*, and of twenty-two of her short stories, a children's book and other material, seemed considerably too cheap. The complete literary manuscript of a living poet, Brian Patten, fared worse, unsold at £7,000.

Dead poets tend to sell better than living ones, their reputations having passed the test of time. Sotheby's sold a number of lots by or relating to Isaac Rosenberg, including a first edition of *Moses* (1916) (£220 to Spitz); an autograph draft of a poem of seven or eight lines, possibly related to "Subjectivity" (£240 to Anderson) and an autograph postcard about his health (£264 to Garber), while the National Portrait Gallery paid £300 for a postcard-sized photograph of Rosenberg in uniform and the Imperial War Museum £451 for a commemorative plaque.

Living poets and writers were very much in evidence among the sixty-six lots sold "partly for the benefit of the Arvon Foundation in conjunction with Sotheby's". Interestingly, Poetry Competition 1982-1983, as the catalogue put it, Sotheby's held a singularly successful sale of modern literature in aid of the Society of Authors last year; in this Arvon sale the fact that many of the writers were comparatively young and therefore unproven as far as literary staying power is concerned, and that much of the material was relatively minor, contributed to a dismal toll of unsold lots. Going through the results is an instructive, if sometimes mortifying